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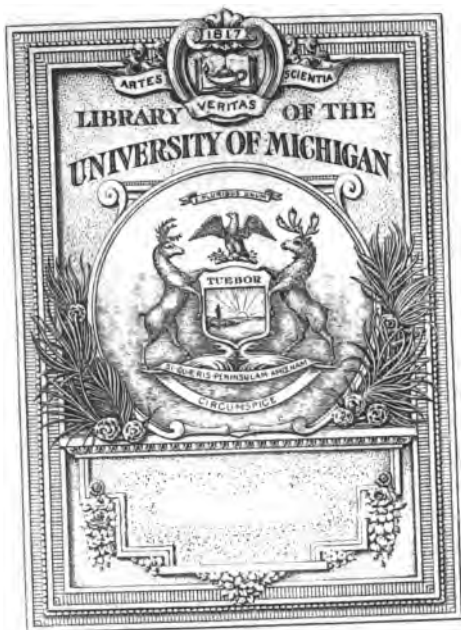
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THE MAKING OF MARY



BY
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PROLOGUE.



STURDY northeast wind was rattling the doors and windows of a deserted farmhouse in Western Michigan.

The building was not old, measured by years, but it had never been painted or repaired, and its wooden face, prematurely lined with weather stains, looked as if it had borne the wear and tear of centuries. The windows, like lidless eyes, stared vacantly at the flat stubble fields and the few spindling trees, a dreary apology for an orchard. There were plenty of shingles off the roof to allow

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the inquisitive rain-drops to follow one another through the rafters, and thence to the floor of the room below, where the darkness was creeping out of the corners to take possession.

The house had been but recently vacated, for there was still a "slab" smoldering on the hearth of the wide fireplace in the outer kitchen, and something that looked almost human, wrapped in a ragged bedquilt, was lying much too near it for safety. A friendly gust of wind came down the chimney, bringing back the smoke, and drawing a faint cough from the bundle. Another gust and another cough, and then a sneeze which burst open the quilt, to disclose an ill-clad little girl, six or seven years old.

She gazed about with drowsy blue eyes till terror of the darkness made her draw the tattered comforter over her head again, and crouching nearer to the smolder-

ing log, she tried to warm her fingers and toes. More wind down the chimney made more smoke, and sent the child coughing back from the fireplace. She was wide awake now, and stood listening. Sounds there were, indeed, but not one that could be associated with any living thing in the house. She felt her way around the walls to where the candle used to be, but it was gone. There was no furniture to stumble over, and when she came to the side of the wall in the inner room from which the stairway crept up, she mounted it on her hands and knees, trembling, partly with cold, partly with fear at the noise made by the flapping of the sole of one of her old shoes. There was a step missing at the turn of the stairs, but the child knew where the vacancy was, and pulling herself over it, she reached the landing, felt all around the walls there, and made the circuit of the three

small rooms in the same fashion. They were entirely empty.

Cautiously the girl stole down the broken stairs and back to her former place by the smoking slab, where she curled herself up into the old quilt again, as into a mother's arms, and spoke aloud, though there was none to listen but the obstreperous wind :

" Anyhow she won't be here to lick me no more ! " That thought seemed to compensate for darkness and loneliness. The voices of wind and rain were apparently more kindly than the human tones to which she had been accustomed, and soothed by their stormy lullaby, the little maid fell asleep.

The sunshine poured freely into the forsaken house next morning, drying up the damp floors, and turning to gold the scrap of yellow hair that showed through a hole in the old quilt. Presently the small girl shook the covering away from her and

stood up, to yawn and stretch herself out of the stiffness from a night spent on the hard floor. She was not a pretty child, unless naturally curling fair hair, that would be fairer when it was washed, could make her so. The long, thin legs that came below her torn dress made her too tall for her age, and what might have been a passable mouth was spoiled by the departure of two of the front "baby" teeth and the tardy arrival of the later contingent.

Part of the day the child seemed satisfied with her new-found liberty. Having discovered a stale crust or two in a cupboard, she wanted no more, for her diet had never been luxurious. Into every corner of the house she intruded her small freckled nose, pulling down from shelves all sorts of odds and ends that had been left behind as worthless at the flitting.

There was an old straw bonnet

with a pair of dirty strings, and therewith the damsel elected to adorn the tousled head, which evidenced but slight acquaintance with comb or brush. She could not find any feminine garments to please her fancy, but there was a boy's jacket, out at elbows and ragged round the edges, which she proudly donned, and as a finishing touch she popped her long slim legs, old shoes and all, into a worn-out pair of man's top-boots that reached to her knees.

"I just wish Mawm Mason had lef' a lookin'-glass behin', so's I could see how I look. My! wouldn't she whack me if she seen me with this bonnet on!" The child smiled broadly as she continued her confidential address to the other valueless things left behind. "I allays knowed she warn't my own mother, an' I'm glad Pete nor Matty aint my own brother nor sister neither. I'd like him to see me in his jacket!"

She pulled the coat across her narrow little chest to where it met in the days when there were buttons on it, and marched up and down the room, making as much noise as possible with the big boots.

This killing of time was all very well while the daylight lasted and the sun warmed up the frosty November air, but when the darkness began to assert itself once more the small waif did not feel so contented.

"There aint no use goin' over to Mis' Morgan's. She don't want me no more'n Mis' Mason did. I guess I'll sleep upstairs to-night with some o' them things over me. I'll be warm anyhow."

In the middle of the front bedroom she heaped up all the *débris* and crawled beneath it. A fantastic pile it seemed to the moon when he looked in after the rain had stopped, the childish head resting on the cover of an old

bandbox at one side and a pair of man's boots sticking out at the other.

The last scrap of bread was finished next day, and the two potatoes picked up in the yard proved uneatable without the softening influence of fire, so there was nothing for it but Mrs. Morgan's. After sunset, when the rapidly falling temperature and the heavy bank of clouds in the west gave warning of a snow-storm, the little girl, still wearing the old bonnet, boy's jacket, and man's boots, left the only home she could remember, and made her way slowly over the hard rough fields and snake fences to the next farmhouse.

Mrs. Morgan was running in from the barn with a shawl over her head.

"Good sakes alive! Mary Mason! I hardly knowed you. What you got on? I thought you was one o' them scarecrows

out o' the fall wheat. Mis' Mason moved to Californy three days ago. Didn't she take you with her?"

"No, mawm."

"So it 'pears. Wal, she hadn't any call to, I s'pose. You aint none o' hers."

By this time they were in the kitchen of the farmhouse, Mrs. Morgan rubbing her hands above the stove, and Mary Mason also venturing near, stretching out her thin arms to the heat, for the adopted jacket was somewhat short in the sleeves.

"What's that mark on yer wrist?"

"Bruise—but it don't hurt now."

"Who done it?"

"Ma—Mis' Mason. I've lots worse'n that on me," said the small girl with some vanity.

"There, now! I jest knew that Mis' Mason was a hard case, though my man would never hear

to it. What you going to do now?"

"I dunno." The accent implied that to be a matter of small moment.

"I don't s'pose we can turn you out to-night. There's room in the attic for you to sleep, but don't you go near one o' my girls' beds with that head o' yourn."

As a hostess, Mrs. Morgan was a slight improvement upon Mrs. Mason. She never took stick or strap to the foundling, and if she occasionally gave her a cuff on the ear it was never strong enough to knock the girl down. But the Morgan children bullied Mary Mason, the Morgan father grumbled at an extra mouth to feed, and when she had been about a month in the house the mistress of it told her she must move on.

"There's an old dress of Ellie's you can have, an' a pair of Sue's cast-off boots, and Tom's old cap."

“Where am I to go, mawm?”

“You jest go on from one farmhouse to another, till you find a place where they’ll keep you all winter. It’s comin’ on to Christmas, an’ people won’t be hard on ye. Tell ’em you aint got no folks.”

The forlorn little pilgrim took up her march down the snow-covered road.







THE MAKING OF MARY.

CHAPTER I.

MY wife is a theosophist. This fact may account for her numerous eccentricities or be simply one of them. I incline to the latter opinion, because she preferred the unbeaten to the beaten track, both in walk and conversation, long before Modern Buddhism was ever heard of in the small Western town of whose chief newspaper (circulation largest in Michigan) I have the honor to be editor and proprietor.

How such a hot-house plant as Theosophy ever took root in the

swamps and sands of the Wolverine State may seem surprising at the first glance, but let the second rest upon our environment—the absence of mountain or swift-flowing river, the presence of fever and ague and half-burnt pine woods—and it will be seen that this Eastern lore with its embarrassment of symbols supplies a long-felt want to starving imagination. We of the West are forever reaching beyond our grasp, have intelligence and perception, but lack the culture necessary for discrimination, and therefore the romantic souls among us who rise above the rampant materialism of the majority go to the other extreme, and hail with enthusiasm the new-old religion.

“It’s better to believe too much than too little, but you theosophists swallow an awful lot,” I say to Belle when she tries to convert me.

I am well aware that many of

my fellow-citizens consider me a subject for commiseration because I have lived for twenty years with so erratic a house-mate, for I have not deemed it necessary to explain to them that without the stimulus of her enlivening spirit, without the element of surprise constantly contributed by my wife's love of variety, the daily life, and therefore the daily paper, of their favorite editor would partake of that flatness which is the predominant characteristic of this western part of the State of Michigan.

Our four sons and two daughters enjoy their mother fully as much as I do, for is she not the most fascinating romancer they ever knew? Now that they are all of an age to be attending school and looking out for themselves, after the manner of independent young Americans, they require from her nothing but sympathy, for their grandmother

sews their buttons on. Grandma!—Ay, there's the rub.

I have no hesitation in owning that I am Scotch by birth. My mother left her native land to make her home with us entirely too late in life to allow Western ideas regarding Sabbath observance, the rearing of children, or the amount of respect due to the opinion of elders, to become ingrafted upon Scottish prejudice concerning these matters.

Mrs. Gemmell Senior has, however, the national peculiarity of judging "blood thicker than water," and whatever her convictions may be concerning the methods of Mrs. Gemmell Junior, she restricts the expression of them to our family circle—in fact, I may say, to myself. She generally seizes me when I lie at my ease on the well-worn lounge in our sitting room, more properly dubbed the "nursery," for it is Liberty Hall for the youngsters.

Two rooms have been knocked into one to accommodate their dolls' houses, bookshelves, toys, and printing machines. Belle had the whole side torn out of the house to build an open fire-place, on purpose to burn slabs, over which the children roast pop-corn to their hearts' content.

"A body wad think," said my mother one cold night five or six years ago, when I lay on the sofa, trying to send my weariness off in smoke, "A body wad think there had been nae cherritable wark dune in the toon ava, till they theossiphies set aboot it. If yer provost and baillies lookit efter things as they ocht, there wad be a dacent puirs-house for the idignant folk, an' a wheen daft leddies like Eesabel needna gang roun' speirin' at yon infeedels for their siller tae build a hoose o' refuse."

"There is a county poorhouse, mother, but it doesn't happen to be located in this city, and they

won't take in anybody there that hasn't been a resident of the county for a certain time."

"Aweel! there's plenty o' kirks, though ye never darken the door o' ane. Do they no' leuk efter their ain puir folk?"

"Yes; but after nobody else's. This House of Refuge is to be non-sectarian, non-religious, humanitarian, in the broadest sense of the term. Ah! There's Belle now," and I gave a sigh of relief as I heard my wife's latch-key in the front door.

She came in with an out-of-door breeze, her dark face glowing from the wintry wind, flakes of newly fallen snow resting like diamonds upon her prematurely white hair, and her brown eyes sparkling with the animation of twenty summers rather than of forty-two.

"Children all gone to bed? That's right! Don't go, mother! I'm sure you'll like to hear about

the House of Refuge. We've got it fixed at last! Those rich old lumbermen that won't give a cent to a church, or any charity connected with one, have gone to the bottom of their pockets this time. Fancy Peter Wood, Dave—five hundred dollars! And Jeff Henderson, five hundred. I have the list in my bag. Like to see it?"

"No' the nicht, thenk ye," said my mother stiffly, but I added:

"Hand it over to me, and I'll put it in to-morrow's *Echo*. That's what they want."

"Nothing of the kind, you old cynic! I shan't tell you another thing about it." But still she went on: "We've taken the old Laurence house on the corner of Garfield Avenue and Pine Street, and it's to be fitted up to accommodate any sort of refugees."

"Irrespective of race, creed,

sex, or color," I whispered parenthetically.

"No one is ever to be turned from the door without a good square meal, and there's to be a back, outside stair erected, up which a tramp can go at any hour of the night, and find a nice clean bed awaiting him—locked away from the rest of the house, of course."

"Oh, why?" I innocently inquired. "Surely you have enough faith in your brother man to believe that he would not commit any breach of hospitality?"

"*I* have," replied Belle, squeezing my recumbent form further against the back of the sofa, upon which she had seated herself. "But remember we are not all theosophists on the Board."

In the words of the historic witness against Mrs. Muldoon, "That's the way the row began!" Belle was elected Treasurer of

the House of Refuge, but as she knows nothing of figures, I had to keep the books of that unique institution, and was therefore enabled to form a practical estimate of its workings.

I shall not attempt a description of the numerous "cases" in which my advice, if not my pocketbook, was freely drawn upon, but shall leave them, along with the description of the many antecedent fads of my beloved better half, to some historian of longer wind, and shall content myself with recounting the particular "case"—and attachments—which most nearly affected our family life and happiness.

"This is what I call solid comfort," said Belle to me one evening late in September, as we sat in the parlor in a couple of deep, springy armchairs, fronting a huge grate fire, that would be banished

by the lighting of the furnace. "Children all in school again, your mother off on a long visit, and plenty of new books on the table."

I looked up from one of the aforesaid new books.

"Just wait! The season's business hasn't begun in the Refuge yet."

"Everything is in good shape for it, though. We've had enough donations of groceries and vegetables to keep us going almost all winter. We've lots of wood for the furnace, and Mack and Hardy have given us some second-hand furniture and——"

The electric door-bell sent out a long, imperative summons.

"Who can that be, Dave, at this time of night? None of the boys locked out?"

"No; they all went up to bed a while ago."

Belle rose and walked to the door. I pulled the tidy from my

chair-back over my bald head to protect me from the draught, but that did not prevent me from hearing what went on.

"Are you Mrs. Gemmell?" This from a female voice, breathless with excitement.

"I am."

"Then you are one of the trustees of the House of Refuge?" gasped another feminine speaker.

"Yes. Won't you come in?"

"No, thank you. We've just come to tell you about this young girl who has run to us for protection."

"We're school-teachers, mawm."

"She's in my class, and she hasn't a friend in the city and knew nowhere else to go."

Then followed some hysterical whispers, which roused my curiosity so much that I went to the door and peeped over the shoulder of my tall wife. The two plain, business-like young women were evidently much distressed, but

between them was a fair-haired slip of a girl of fifteen or sixteen, the least disturbed of the group. The three older women might have been talking in a foreign tongue, or of someone else, so unconcerned did she appear, present danger being over.

"How did she happen to be with these people?" Belle was asking as I came forward.

"The wife of this brute of a man told us that she was nursemaid with the Ferguson Family Concert Company, but they dropped her here in Lake City without a friend or a cent."

"She took her in to help sell fruit and ice cream evenings, and she let her go to school through the day."

At this juncture the subject under discussion broke into a beaming smile, showing all her fine teeth. Her cheek dimpled and reddened, and her blue eyes, full of fun, looked straight into

mine. I became suddenly aware that I had forgotten to remove the tidy, and retired in confusion, but heard Belle's conclusion of the interview :

"Just wait a second till I give you a line to the matron of the House of Refuge. You can leave the girl there till we see what can be done for her. She'll be perfectly safe, and had better keep on going to school as usual."

A week afterward I asked my wife what had become of her latest *protégée*.

"You mean Mary Mason? She's in the refuge yet, attending school, and we've settled that man's ice-cream saloon."

"How?"

"Boycotted him. We can't reach him any other way."

"That's rather hard on his wife, who seems to be a decent sort of party."

"The innocent often appear to

suffer with and for the guilty, but if you understood the law of Karma you would know that all the evil that befalls us is really the result of some wrongdoing of our own in a previous incarnation. Mary Mason herself is an instance."

"What's the matter with her?"

"Poor girl! She's been knocked from pillar to post all her days. She hasn't an idea who her parents are, and there isn't a creature in the world she has any claim upon. She must have gone very far astray *last time* to have been brought into the world again with such disadvantages."

"It appears to me she has a great many advantages—lovely blue eyes, good teeth, the fashionable golden shade of hair, and the prettiest complexion I've seen for many a day."

"Don't be provoking, Dave! The poor little thing has the

marks of some of her beatings on her yet. The Ferguson family were the first who ever treated her decently, or paid her any wages."

"Why did they drop her?"

"One of our Committee took it upon herself to write and ask them. They replied that the girl was of perfectly good character, so far as they knew, but she fell so ridiculously in love with Frank Ferguson, their eldest son, that she was making a nuisance of herself, and so they had to let her go."

I laughed.

"There are generally two sides to that kind of story."

"At the meeting of the trustees to-morrow it is to be decided what's to be done with her, because she says she doesn't want to go to school any more. She's never had much of a chance before to learn anything, and she's in a class with little bits of girls, and she doesn't like it—says she'd rather go to work to earn her own living."

Belle came home from that meeting with her face ablaze with righteous wrath. Her hands trembled so much over the tea-cups at our evening meal that even sixteen year old Watty, our eldest son, remarked it.

"What's the matter with *mamma*? Her trolley's off."

I knew there was trouble in the wind, so I fortified myself with a good supper and read my paper at the same time, to leave myself free for what was to follow. The children study their lessons in the back end of the nursery, and I therefore forbore to take up my usual position upon the sofa, but withdrew to the parlor with my pipe.

Presently my wife followed me, nearly walking over the furniture in her excitement.

"Go on, Belle; out with it!"

"You will listen, will you, seriously?"

"Certainly, mawm. I never

had any sort of an objection to your making a scavenger barrel of me, so go ahead."

"Oh, these benevolent women, Dave! Any one of the malone is as good-hearted as can be, but lump them together on a committee, and they're as cold and cruel and grasping as the meanest business man you could name!"

"More so!" said I, approvingly, and for once Isabel did not resent the disparagement of her sex.

"The question arose, what was to be done about Mary Mason, and every one of them, David—every one of them, with young daughters of their own growing up at home, voted to let that girl go round this town selling a book."

"Was that what she wanted to do herself?"

"Yes; but think of them letting her do it! You know as well as I do what sort of a city this is,

and whether it's safe for a lovely girl like that to go to men's offices, trying with her pretty looks and ways to wheedle them into subscribing for Stanley's 'Darkest Africa.' Oh, I was wild! I said to Mrs. Robinson: 'How would you like your Lulu to do it?' 'The cases are very different,' said she; 'my daughter has no need to earn her living.' 'Mrs. Constable,' said I, 'if your grandchild were left alone in the world, what would you think of the charity of any body of women who allowed her to go from under their protection to make her living in this way?' 'I don't see the connection,' said she; 'Mary Mason's been fighting the world since she was seven years old, and just because she happens to have a pretty face, you seem to think she should be put in a glass case and never do anything for herself.' "

"She had you there, Belle,"

said I, pulling her down to the arm of my big easy-chair. "Let the girl alone; she'll come out all right. She's too good-looking for a nurse or a housemaid, and she doesn't know enough arithmetic to be a shop girl. I don't see what else she can do."

"That's just what the ladies calmly decided," said my wife, walking the floor again. "They seemed to think that a little business training would just be the making of Mary. Oh, these Christians!"

"You see, my dear," said I, "committees are not supposed to have any conscience. They have the income of the Refuge in trust for the contributors, and they have no right to keep on supporting a girl who is willing to work for herself. How she proposes to do it is none of their business."

"That's just what it is—their business; their business to see that she doesn't meet the very

fate we've saved her from once already. Oh! there's no getting these narrow-minded, orthodox, bigoted people to see more than one side of a question."

"Take care you don't become dogmatic on your own side," said I, rising to knock the ashes out of my pipe. "If it's the law of Karma that's responsible for her having been left to shift for herself at so early an age, it's the same law that's after her now, and I wouldn't interfere with its operations, if I were you."

"You don't in the least understand what you are talking about," and Belle sailed from the room to settle a noisy dispute in the nursery.





CHAPTER II.

THROUGH that winter I caught occasionally a glimpse of Mary Mason on the street, but as I had not the pleasure of her acquaintance, I did not stop to ask her how she was getting on. My wife told me, however, that she lived in a room over a store down town, and took her meals out, and that she was succeeding very well with her subscription list.

“The girl is all right, if only the gossips would let her alone. Some of them assert that she had a child in the Refuge, and though the ladies on our committee indignantly deny that, they shake

their heads, and say of course they don't know anything about her now."

"It's the only excitement a lot of these women have," said I. "They wouldn't read a French novel for the world, and some of them wouldn't be seen in a theater, so they have to satisfy their morbid craving for sensationalism by hearing and repeating all sorts of unsavory tales—and they do it in the name of charity! They're very sorry that there is so much wickedness in the world, but since it is there, they enjoy the investigation of details, and it doesn't matter very much whether they're doing any good or not."

"There aren't any details to investigate, so far as Mary Mason is concerned. I took pains to make sure of that, when I heard that a big hulk of a machinist, who rooms on the same flat, was telling lies about her, just because

she refused to have anything to say to him."

When I was leaving the *Echo* office at noon one day I saw Henderson's handsome black span, with the wreck of a sleigh behind them, come down the street at a full gallop, and I was just debating with myself whether my duty as a citizen, which called me to attempt to stop the brutes, was stronger than my duty to my wife and family, which bade me stay where I was, when a young lady jumped the snow ridge at the edge of the sidewalk and flung herself at the bit of the nearest horse. The powerful animal swung her right off her feet, but he was checked for an instant, and in that instant a young man seized the mate on the other side; the team was stopped and surrounded by a crowd directly. Then I saw it was Mary Mason who was the heroine of the drama. She withdrew from the

throng, straightened her flat hat above her rosy face, and walked off with her habitual indifferent air.

"She's got good grit, that girl," said I to myself, but I thought no more about her till I came home on a certain evening in March, and found her comfortably ensconced on one side of our nursery fire, while my mother from the other side cast suspicious glances at her over her spectacles. "Miss Mason," had supper with us, and then I retired to my big leather-covered spring rocker in the parlor to await developments. That chair needs to be approached with deference, for it has a precocious trick of either tilting in the air the feet of any unwary occupant, or of tipping him out on the floor. I know its disposition, can preserve my proper balance, and have never been flung either forward or backward—except once each way.

Presently Belle followed me, "loaded up," as the boys say.

"It seems as if I was never to get free from the responsibility of that child."

"What's up now?"

"Down town to-day I met the chief of police——"

"Great chum of yours!"

"Yes, indeed. We've had considerable conversation at different times about some of my cases. To-day he said, 'You're interested in that young girl, Mary Mason, aint you, Mrs. Gemmell?' 'Yes,' said I, though my heart sank, and I didn't see why he couldn't have addressed any other one of the committee; 'anything wrong with her?' 'Not yet,' said he; 'but there will be pretty soon if somebody doesn't look after her. There's a scheme on foot to take her off to Chicago—to sell a book—so they say.' 'Good gracious! Nobody would dare!' 'Wouldn't they, though?' said he. 'There's

a well-known drummer in this town at the bottom of it. He's aware the girl has no friends, and in Chicago she don't even know a soul. It's too bad, for I've had my eye on the young woman all winter, and she's kept perfectly straight.'

"You may think, Dave, that I ought to be hardened to horrors by this time, but I became fairly dazed as the chief of police went on to say, 'I can't move in the matter. We never can touch these things until the mischief is done; but if you like to make inquiries, you'll find out that I've been telling you the truth.'

"When he left me, I turned to come home, not knowing what to do, but going round the first corner, didn't I run right into Mary Mason herself! I hadn't laid eyes on her for a couple of months. 'How d'ye do, Mrs. Gemmell?' she said, for I stopped and stared at her as if she'd been

a white crow. 'What about "Darkest Africa?"' I found breath to ask, though it was Darkest Chicago I had in my mind. 'I've done with that now,' she said; 'did very well, too.' 'And what are you going to do next?' 'I dunno. Whatever turns up. I've got an offer to go to Chicago to sell a book there.' I caught her by the arm as if I'd been the chief of police. 'Mary, will you please go to my house and wait there for me till I come?' 'Oh, yes, mawm, if you want me to,' and off she went, asking no questions.

"Well, Dave, I've put in four hours of amateur detective work this afternoon, and I feel as if I needed a moral bath. I found out it was all true, as the chief of police had said. There was a plot to ruin the girl, and I don't think the author of it will forget his interview with me in a hurry."

"What good will that do the

young woman? There are plenty more of his kind in the world, and with her inherited tendencies I suppose it's only a question of time—how soon she goes to the bad."

"David Gemmel!"

It is worth while making a caustic speech occasionally to see Isabel rise to her full height. Her brown eyes positively emit sparks, and her gray hair, which she wears waved and parted, gives her an air of distinction that would not be out of place upon an avenging spirit.

"I came home all tired out," she went on, sinking into the chair beside mine, "and looking through the nursery window, there sat Mary Mason with our little Chrissie on her knee. The two faces in the firelight looked so much alike that my heart gave a great thump, and I vowed that girl should never be set adrift again. This is the second time

she has been cast upon my shore, and I must see to her."

So Mary Mason dropped into our family circle without anybody having very much to say in the matter—except my mother!

"Wha's yon 'at Eesabell's ta'en up wi' the nōo?"

"Her name's Mason," said I; "Mary Mason."

"I h'ard yer wife was thinkin' o' keepin' a hoosemaid, but I didna expeck tae see her pap herself doon at the table wi' the fem'ly."

"She's not a housemaid. She's just staying with us for a while."

"Ye'd think Eesabell nicht hae eneugh adae wi' her ain, 'thoot takin' in ony strangers."

"But Mary is to help with the housework, in return for her board and clothes."

"Let her wear a kep an' apron, then, an' eat wi' Marg'et."

"Margaret might object," and I laughed at the probable dismay

of our stalwart, rough-and-ready five-foot-tenner, should this ladyfied blonde permanently invade her domain.

"Hoo lang's she gaun to st'y?"

"That's more than I can tell you."

When Mary had been a week in the house, it became apparent that something must be done with her.

"She's bound she'll not go back to the public school, Dave, and yet she cannot read or write. Do you think we can afford to send her to boarding-school—to a convent, for instance, where she'd be well looked after, and allowances made for her backwardness?"

Belle and I were out driving together. It was the first spring-like evening we had had, and I was trying Jim Atwood's new mare on Maple Avenue, which had been newly block-paved. So engrossed was I in watching her

paces I did not reply to my wife at once, and she continued :

"You were going to get me a horse and a victoria this spring, but I'm willing to give them up to send Mary to school."

"Please yourself, my dear. You would be the one to use the turnout. I'm content to borrow from my friends. Isn't she a beauty?"

Belle came out of space to answer me.

"Yes, just now ; but she'll not be when she's old. Her features are not good at all ; her forehead's too narrow, and her nose too broad. Were it not for her lovely hair and complexion, she'd have nothing to brag about but a pair of very ordinary blue eyes."

"Who? The mare?"

"Don't be stupid, Dave, and do attend to what I am saying. I hardly ever have a chance to speak to you, goodness knows!"

"You get the editorial ear

oftener and longer than anybody else."

"Lend it to me now, then. Don't you think a convent would be the best place for Mary?"

"Perhaps — as there are no theosophical educational institutions that we know about."

"Mary isn't far enough on for theosophist yet. She'll have to come back many times before she is. The Roman Catholic Church is on her plane this incarnation."

"It does seem to catch the masses, that's a fact, whereas your theosophy doesn't appear to be practicable for uneducated people nor for children."

"I don't agree with you there."

"Then why were you so anxious to send Watty to a church school to finish his education, and why are you on the lookout already for a boarding-school for the two girls where they will have the best of Christian influences? What is your object in being

so particular that the younger boys are regular in their attendance at our surpliced choir?"

"It gives them a good idea of music—but that is not the point just now. Can we afford to send Mary Mason to a convent, or can we not?"

"Choose between her and the buggy mare 'suitable for a lady to drive,' " said I; but in reality it was my mother who settled the question.

When we came home that evening she was sitting by the fireside,

"Nursin' her wrath to keep it warm."

"Ye maun either pit yon hizzy oot the hoose, or I'll hitta gang."

"What's the matter now, mother?"

"I tell't her to brush the boys' bits tae be ready for the schule in the mornin'. They were thrang wi' their lessons an' she wasna daein' a han's turn."

"And what did she say?"

"S'y! I wush ye'd seen the leuk she gi'ed me!"

"The boys can brush their ain bits," said she; "I'm no' their servant."

I laughed.

"It's well seen she hasn't been brought up in Scotland, or she would know it was the bounden duty of the girls in the house to wait on the boys."

"An' a hantle better it is than to see the laddies aye rinnin' efter the lasses, tendin' them han' an' fut as they dae here. When a man comes hame efter his d'y's wark, he should be let sit on his sate, an' hae a' things dune for him."

"David," said Belle, sinking to a footstool at my feet with a dramatic gesture, "you shall never button my boots again! But seriously," she continued, as mother withdrew in high dudgeon to her sanctum upstairs, "I don't

think Mary should be expected to brush the boys' boots. We didn't engage her as servant, and even if we had, there isn't a hired girl in this part of the country that wouldn't make a fuss if she had to brush the boots of the man of the house, not to mention the boys. We'll have to pack Mary off somewhere, if only to keep the peace."

So Mary was sent to a convent, and at the end of three months came back for her holidays to our summer cottage at Interlaken. Being so near the big lake does not agree with my mother, and she rarely spends more than a week with us there, but during July and August visits my married sister in town. The coast was clear for Belle and me to decide what progress had been made in the making of Mary, and we fancied we discovered a good deal.

"What have they done to you, those nuns, to tone you down so

quickly, Mary?" I asked, as she sat beside me, swinging in a low rocker, and looking so pretty that I was quite proud of her as an ornament to our front veranda.

"I dunno," she said, "unless it was the exercise for sitting perfectly still on a row of chairs. A nun goes behind us and drops a big book or something, and any girl that jumps gets a bad mark."

"Capital!" I cried; "no wonder you have learned repose of manner."

Thus encouraged, the girl continued:

"Then we have little parties and receptions, and we have to converse with the nuns and with each other, and anybody that mentions one of the three D's gets a bad mark."

"The three D's?"

"Yes, sir—Dress, Disease, and Domesticity."

"Hear this, Belle," I said, laughing, as my wife took the rocking

chair on the other side of me ;
“fancy any collection of women
being obliged to steer clear of the
three D’s !”

“You should ask Mary about
her studies,” was the severe reply.
“We were much pleased with
your letters.”

“Yes, mawm ; Sister Stella was
always very good about that ;
helped me with the big words,
and often wrote the whole thing
out for me. Sometimes I had to
copy it two or three times before
I could please her.”

Belle hastily changed the sub-
ject. “Let Mr. Gemmell hear
that piece you recited to me this
morning.”

I am no judge of elocution, but
the general effect of the young
girl standing there in the arch of
the veranda, a clematis-wreathed
post on either side, and her face,
with its delicate coloring, turned
toward the golden twilight, was
pleasing in the extreme.

"She'll maybe be famous some day," said Belle, when Mary had discreetly retired. "She is far quicker at learning verses off by heart than she is at reading them."

"Still, to be a successful elocutionist nowadays one has to be thoroughly well educated, and Mary is too late in beginning."

"You can't tell. She's got the appearance, and that's half the battle."

"With us, perhaps; but remember, we are not capable critics, even though one of us is a Theosophist."

"Laugh as you like, Dave. Theosophy satisfies me, because it explains some things in my own nature that I never could understand before."

"It may be that you are too soon satisfied. That's the way with all new movements—one story is good till another is told. Your great-granddaughter will

smile at the credulity of your ideas on this very subject."

"She can smile, and so can you. We don't pretend to know everything; we only hope that we are on the right road to learn. I, for one, am thankful to think that there are wiser heads than mine puzzling over the problem of our psychic powers. I've always taken impressions from inanimate objects, and it has bothered me. Now I find my sensations analyzed and classified under the head of Psychometry, and it is a comfort to know that other people besides myself can discern an *aura*, and are foolishly wise enough to trust the impressions they receive in that way."

"But if I were you, I don't think I'd make a parlor entertainment out of the gift,—if it is a gift,—as I heard you did at the Wades' the other night."

"Who told you? What have you heard?"

"Newspaper men hear everything. You asked Mr. Saxon to hold his handkerchief pressed tightly in his hand for a few minutes, and then to give it to you. You shut your eyes as you held it, and received the impression of his 'aura,' or the atmosphere which surrounds him, or whatever you like to call it, and then the company asked you questions, and you gave him a great old character. He didn't like it a bit, nor did his wife, nor his mother-in-law. You'll make enemies for yourself if you don't watch out."

"It *was* wrong of me to exercise my powers just to gratify idle curiosity. No good Theosophist would approve of it."

"Say, rather, 'no sensible person would.' The Theosophists haven't a monopoly of common sense. To me they appear slightly deficient in that article,

but I dare say they make up for it in uncommon sense."

"You speak more wisely than you know," said Belle solemnly. "If I hadn't taken in some of the Brotherhood ideas I wonder where that pretty, innocent, young girl would have been by this time. Would you like me to go back and be as I was in the old days, a rank materialist, caring for nothing but dress, dancing, and having a good time? You know you wouldn't, David. You know as well as I do that Theosophy has been the making of me, and through me it shall be the making of Mary too."





CHAPTER III.

TO the Scotchman or Englishman, with Loch Katrine or Windermere in his fond memory's eye, it is not surprising that the great lakes of America seem howling wildernesses of water, for the shores are mostly low and unpicturesque. There is no changing tide to give variety, no strong smell of seaweed nor salt breeze to brace the wearied nerves, but the wearied nerves are braced nevertheless. The sand is soft and clean to extend one's length upon, and the waves forever rolling up at one's feet are soothing in their monotony. There is no fear of the encroach-

ment of the water, no fear of its leaving a bare mud-flat for nearly a mile; and the unlimited expanse of blue which meets the horizon satisfies the eye, which cares not if the land on the other side be hundreds or thousands of miles away, so long as it be out of sight.

Two young people one evening in July seemed to find Lake Michigan perfectly satisfactory in every respect. The girl sat on a log of driftwood, poking holes in the sand with the pointed toes of her shoes, much too fine for the purpose, while the young man stretched at her feet looked at her instead of the sunset they had come to admire. I could not help thinking what a pretty picture they made, as I strolled along the shore with my pipe, to get cooled off after a very hot day in town.

The family were all at Interlaken, but Margaret was left in

Lake City to keep the grass watered, and to give me my mid-day dinner. I am unable to decide which occupation she considered the more important. It is not easy to get grass to grow with us, and anyone who can display a reasonably green patch in July and August gives evidence of considerable perseverance in the matter of lawn sprinkling. I told Margaret she would be ready to enter the Fire Brigade next winter, she was getting to be such an expert with the hose. But to return to the shore of Michigan.

The pair of lovers interested me so much that I gradually edged nearer to them. The species seldom objects to the proximity of a stout little man with a prosaic pipe in his mouth and a pair of light blue eyes, handicapped by spectacles, that seem always to be looking for a sail on the horizon. In fact, I never attract any attention anywhere,

unless my wife is along, and then I am only too proud and happy to shine in her reflection.

So I sat down on a piece of stump, worn white and smooth like a skeleton before being cast up by the waves; but when the two caught sight of me, the man sprang up and came toward me, holding out his hand, while the girl sauntered off in the other direction, and I saw that she was Mary Mason.

"Hello, Link?" said I to the young fellow. "Didn't know you were down here."

"I'm at the hotel for a week or two. I've just been making the acquaintance of your adopted daughter."

"My what?"

"You have adopted her, haven't you?"

"Don't know that I have—hadn't considered the matter at all."

"She's a sweet girl, and a

beauty too. Anyone would be proud to own her."

"You'd better let Dolly Martin hear you say that."

Abraham Lincoln Todd straightened himself up in the most independent bachelor style.

"She can look after me when we're married, but in the meantime I'm a free man."

He is considered very handsome, tall and dark, a good business man too, and Belle had quite approved of the engagement between him and Dolly Martin, who, though not a pretty girl, was strong and sensible, and the daughter of one of her oldest friends.

Lincoln must be taking advantage of his intimacy with our family to flirt with Mary Mason.

Interlaken is not a fashionable resort. Even the hotel is a homely abode, which the guests seem to run themselves, though they generally prefer to live outdoors and go inside only for meals

and beds. Once in a while, on a chilly evening, the young people get up a dance, and some of us older folks are dragged into it too.

Scotchmen love to dance, and I am no exception. I am not up to waltzing or any of the new-fangled round dances, but give me a Highland schottische, or a square dance, when there is an inventive genius to call off the figures and prescribe plenty of variety. There was no professional caller-off at Interlaken, but Lincoln Todd did duty for one as he danced. When he tired of it, and led off into a round of waltzes, ripples, jerseys, bon tons, rush polkas, and goodness knows what besides, I remained as a wall-flower.

The reason that I sat there was that I could not take my eyes off Mary Mason. Where she learned to dance I know not, but dance she did, with a grace and *abandon* that made every other girl in the

room a clod-hopper. Lincoln Todd was quite infatuated with her.

Ours is one of the dozen or so of cottages that radiate from the big hotel. Most of the cottagers take dinner and supper at the hotel, being, like ourselves, in a servantless condition. Belle said she could get along perfectly well without Margaret, when she had Mary Mason to help her with the housework, and, indeed, there was not much to be done. The four bedrooms open into one central room that we call the sitting-room, but it is only in wet weather it justifies the name, for, as a rule, we sit in rockers or swing in hammocks on the broad veranda that runs round three sides of the house. The cottages lie so close together that a good jumper can easily spring from one veranda to the next, and the lady proprietors gossip across, and the men too when they come down from

business every evening, or from Saturday till Monday. My lot is generally the shorter allowance, and one Sunday afternoon I lay in my favorite hammock on the north side of the veranda, sleeping the sleep of the brain-tired editor, till voices roused me.

"Mary, where did you get that new tennis racket?"

"Mr. Todd gave it to me."

"Haven't I told you distinctly that you were not even to take candy from Mr. Todd?"

"He gives things to you and Chrissie."

"That's a very different matter. Chrissie is a child, and he is an old friend of the family."

"I can't help it if he likes to give me presents."

"You can help taking them, especially from an engaged man."

"I don't care if he is engaged. He says he don't care anything at all about Miss Martin. He only went after her for her money."

He likes me best, and he says he'll never marry her."

"Mary! I should think you'd know better than to make yourself so cheap. You give Mr. Todd back that racket right away, and tell him Mrs. Gemmell said you were not to keep it, and the next time he brings you down flowers or chocolates you do the same."

If I had not known the sex and the approximate age of Mary, I should have thought it was a small boy in a temper who stamped off the veranda.

The next Saturday night the full moon was assisted in her duties by a large bonfire down on our beach. The Adamless Eden, having received its "week-end" male contingent, was stimulated to a corn-roasting. The green ears, stuck on the ends of long sticks, were held by girls and men over the fire till roasted, and then passed on to a row of matrons, disguised in large aprons, who

salted and buttered them ready for eating. If you know anything that tastes sweeter than a freshly roasted and buttered ear of Indian corn, your experience is broader than mine.

Using my eyes habitually in the way of business, I could not avoid noticing that Lincoln Todd was not collecting his share of driftwood for keeping up the fire, nor did I see Mary Mason's pretty face in the garland of beauties bending with eager interest over the poles bayoneted with cobs of corn. It may have been fear of spoiling her complexion that kept her at one side whispering with Link, but it served them both right that Dolly Martin should choose that very moment for her stage entrance. She and her mother joined the group of butterers, and I noticed that Mrs. Martin returned Belle's cordial greeting rather stiffly. Then Miss Dolly calmly walked over to

the pair sitting apart, having evidently recognized the back of Lincoln's blazer. She pretended to stumble over one of his feet.

"Oh, excuse me!" said she; and when Link sprang up, Mary Mason had the pleasure of witnessing the warmest sort of a meeting between the engaged lovers. They sallied off in the moonlight, his arm around her waist.

No one but me noticed the young girl slipping down on the sand, and laying her head on the log on which she had been sitting, and even I pretended not to see that her handkerchief was in action.

"Hello, Mary!" said I, "I'll match you skipping stones. Look at this!"

With that I sent a beautiful flat one skimming along with nearly a dozen hops in the brilliant track of the moon on the water. She did not pay any attention to me at first, and I kept skipping away,

just as if I did not see her moping her eyes. By-and-by a stroke worthy of myself sent a pebble spinning through the ripples, and Mary's ready laugh rang out beside me. Within twenty minutes of Dolly Martin's appearance on the scene, "Mamie" was the center of the corn-roasters, and the gayest of the gay. Belle told me she kept on that line of conduct during the whole week that Miss Martin and her mother stayed at the hotel.

"It seemed to me that Dolly took a special pleasure in parading her happiness before poor Mary, but Mary never showed the white feather."

"There's the making of a fine woman in her."

"That may be," said my wife. "But this last week she has been extremely wearing on me. Having no particular man on the string, she has followed me about like a spaniel, wanted to know

what I'm reading, and has begun a book the minute I'm through with it."

"I've seen her carrying 'The Coming Race' about with her lately, but I notice that the book-mark always stays in the same place."

Mary became fond of solitary rambles back in the pine woods, intersected by plank walks that made promenading possible. People liked to wander through there in the evenings, when the camp-lights in the hollows lent a mysterious charm, and on up to the big Knight Templar's Building, erected on the highest point of the sandy bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. Every night that prominent structure blazed with electric lights, and sometimes a band played on the veranda; but the only visitors were cottagers and guests from the hotel, who went up there to walk about and enjoy the prospect.

Our city editor often surprises me with the depth and breadth of his local information. For example, I opened the *Echo* one day to be made aware that "Miss Mamie Gemmell" had outstripped all the lady bicyclists in town by making the distance between Lake City and Interlaken in forty-seven minutes. It was also remarked that she was one of the most graceful lady riders on the road.

I wonder how many generations a man must be removed from Scotland before he becomes callous to the disposition of the family name. I own that I squirmed inwardly, but with outward composure asked Belle where Mary got the "bike."

"Watty's old one. He taught Mary to ride it, and then made her a present of it, for he's set his heart on a new wheel."

"Confoundedly generous of him!"

"I'm glad you look at it that

way. It is so seldom that he does give up anything for anybody, I thought he ought to be encouraged, and I said he should have a new bicycle with pneumatic tires and all the latest improvements at Christmas, if you did not see fit to give it to him sooner."

In August I took my annual day's fishing, which has come to be rather a joke in the house, because, in spite of my elaborate preparations the night before, and the unheard-of hour at which I rise in the morning, I have never been known to catch anything worth bringing home.

This time my companion was a journalist from Chicago, an ardent young fellow, who could not keep from "shop" even when off on his holidays, and who had started a small weekly paper in which were to be recorded the doings of a certain congress holding a summer session in our grove.

We rowed up the little lake on the edge of the lily-pads, fishing both sides of it, but caught nothing except a sunfish or two. Then we lit our pipes and talked.

"What an extremely clever young lady that adopted daughter of yours is. I heard only the other day that she is not your own."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir. No one would believe it to talk to her, but she's got a surprisingly bright mind for one so young. She can't be more than seventeen, but her descriptions are good enough for one of the best magazines, and she has evidently thought a lot on all the leading topics of the day. Why, she's up in Hypnotism, Evolution, Theosophy—everything!"

"Bless my soul! How did you find all that out?"

Thereupon he fished from his pocket a couple of his tiresome little publications.

"I asked her to write something for our paper, that's how I know. Want to see?"

I do not set up to be a literary critic, but I guess I know my own wife's style of composition when I encounter it. During the two years that we were engaged she lived in Detroit and I in Indiana, and I missed her letters so much after we were married that to this day she is in the habit of letting me read those she writes to other people. I was not going to give her away to that newspaper man, though, for the name "Mary Gemmell" stared me in the face from the end of each article; but I remonstrated with Belle when I reached home.

"How could I help it, Dave? There was the girl teasing me to write something for her because this fellow had asked her to do it. She said I could scribble down something just as easy as not, and then she could copy it for him.

Copy it! She took hours to do it, and I considered she deserved all the praise she got for the articles."

"I wouldn't do it again, if I were you. It sets the girl sailing under false colors."

"Poor Mary! Her one little accomplishment has been of no use to her since that professional elocutionist came to the hotel, and I hated to see her cast altogether into the shade, especially while Dolly Martin was here."

Still there came another production from the pen of Miss Mary Gemmell.

"Really, Belle," said I, "this is carrying the joke too far."

"Don't you worry about it. Some of the old cats at the hotel began to suspect that Mary hadn't written those things, and accused me to my face of doing it myself, so I had to write an account of the picnic up the little lake, because they all know I wasn't there at all!"

"Let this be the last, then."

"It shall, I assure you, for I am much displeased with Mary. Since Mrs. Martin and Dolly left, she's been going it just as hard as ever with Lincoln Todd. If you walk up to the Knight Templar's Building I'll warrant you'll find them there promenading this very minute."

"No, I won't, because I passed them just a little while ago as I came through the woods, sitting on a secluded bench, his arm round her waist and her head on his shoulder."

"Didn't they see you?"

"I dare say, but I never let on I saw them. What's the use? I can't be expected to leave the *Echo* to my subs, and come down here to play special policeman to Mary Mason. I should have thought Todd was more of a gentleman."

"So should I, but I've spoken to him, quarreled with him

indeed, so that he doesn't come near the house, but I know that he and Mary meet just the same. Thank Heaven! he will be married soon."

"Have you told Mary that?"

"Yes; but she laughs and shrugs her shoulders; evidently thinks she knows more about Lincoln Todd's intentions than I do."

In the last week of August Mr. Todd went off for a few days "on business," and then there came a dreadful morning when the announcement of his marriage to Dolly Martin appeared in the *Echo*.

Mary would not believe her ears. She took the paper down to the beach, and spelled out the notice word by word. Then she lay down on the sand and bawled, kicking and squealing like a year-old infant when Belle appealed to her self-respect.

"I could have spanked her

well," said my wife. The worst of it was that the whole hotel was "on to the racket," as Watty vulgarly expressed it, and rather chuckled over Belle's mortification, instead of sympathizing with her in the trying time she was having with her "adopted daughter."

Our grief, as a family, was not unbearable when the time came in September for Mary Mason to go back to the convent.





CHAPTER IV.

THE self-assertive sleigh-bells suddenly ceased their tinkling, and the long covered van, with its four horses, drew up in front of our "House of Many Gables," in Lake City. Watty, then a tall lad of eighteen, over-coated, fur-capped, and gloved, went quickly out, banging the front door after him, while his younger brothers and sisters made holes with their breath through the frost on the window panes, to watch his departure with the hilarious load of young folks.

"Why aint you goin', Mame?" asked Joe, our smallest son, of the girl spending her Christmas holidays with us.

"Wasn't asked," she replied defiantly. "An' what's more, I don't care to go anywheres, neither, if the girls don't act better to me than they done at that party the other night."

Belle raised her head from the Treasurer's book of the House of Refuge.

"Perhaps you weren't nice to them, Mary?"

"Yes, I was too. I smiled whenever one of them looked at me, but they all turned their heads as if they'd never seen me before."

My wife sighed as she bent over her book again. If the difficulty of befriending Mary rested only with outsiders it might have been patiently borne, but there was mother, to whom the girl's presence in the house was a constant grievance.

I had been able to buy a quiet horse and a Mikado cutter for Belle when the snow came, but she

had no pleasure out of them during the vacation.

"I'm going to drive downtown, mother," I heard her say one morning. "Would you like to go?"

"Is Mary gaun?"

"I thought of taking her."

"Then I'll no' gang. I wadna like to crood Mary."

"Dear mother, there's plenty of room."

"Ay, ay, but ye ken Mary doesna like tae sit wi' her back tae the horse."

That sort of thing was always happening. One day the old lady came home from a round of visits, much perturbed in mind and body. The sandy hair I inherited, and have largely lost, does not show the gray with which it is mixed, and so light and wiry is she one finds it difficult to remember my mother's seventy years. She is a small woman, but her personality is sufficiently large for the ripples

to be felt throughout the household when its surface is disturbed.

"What dae ye think I've been hearin'?" she cried, finding me alone in the nursery on the sofa, and helpless in her hands.

"I can't imagine, mother. You generally have something spicy to tell us after you've been calling on the MacTavishes."

"Dae ye ken 'at yon hizzy ye've ta'en intill yer hoose ca's hersel' Mary *Gemmell*?"

"Oh, well, what's in a name?"

"I wonner tae hear ye, Davvit! What wad yer faither hae thocht about it, or yer gran'faither? Gie'n the femly name, that's come doon unspotted frae ae generation till anither, tae a funnlin' aff the streets! Ou, ay! I micht 'a' kent what wad happen when I h'ard tell o' ye bein' merrit till an Amerrikan."

"Hold up there, mother. You're just twenty years too late in raking up that story. If it

suits me and Belle to have that girl called 'Mary Gemmell,' Mary Gemmell she shall be, if it turns all Scotland head over heels into the North Sea."

So seldom do I break out that an eruption of mine never fails to clear the air of an unwelcome topic.

Our boys have grown up on a sort of an "every-man-for himself" principle, and when it came to a fight for the favorite corner of the sofa, the favorite game, or picture-book, "Mamie" was in the thick of it every time.

"What else can you expect?" said I to Belle consolingly. "She's been fighting the world on her own account ever since she can remember, and our house represents to her only a change of battle ground."

"I think her father must have been a gentleman."

"He certainly had one gentlemanly peculiarity."

"Don't be a brute, Dave. I mean that Mary's ancestors must have been wealthy people, she has such a taste for luxury."

"That doesn't follow. I'm sure you've seen plenty of poor folks go without the necessities of life in order to get the luxuries."

"She is shiftless enough. To-day I took her into a store to buy her some stockings, and she refused to have any but the very best quality. 'The second best are what I get for myself, Mary,' said I; 'they wear much longer than the others.' 'I don't care,' she said. 'If I can't have the best, I don't want any.' 'Then do without,' said I, and we left the place. The fun of it is that she won't even darn her old ones! I can't always be so firm with her. I'm amazed at myself sometimes, the things she gets out of me. What do you suppose she wants now?"

I gave a warning cough to sig-

nify that my mother had come into the nursery, but Belle gazed straight ahead into the wood fire, and seesawed in the rattan rocker—a tuneful symphony in a mauve tea-gown.

“A cornet, if you please.”

“A cornet!” said I. “Whatever put that into her head?”

“I can’t tell. She says the music professor at the convent can teach her to play it, and she thinks if she learned she might be able to lead the singing in a church with one.”

“Perhaps somebody played the cornet in that concert company she was with.”

“Na, na. It’s nearer hame than that,” mother struck in. “She has a notion o’ ane o’ thae cratur’s ’at pl’y at the Opera Hoose. I hae seen her gang by the window wi’ him, an’ spiered at Watty wha he was.”

“I don’t like Wat’s telling tales of Mary.”

"He dinna, Davvit, till I pit it tae him. He canna bear the tawpie, and doesna like to hae her p'inted oot as his sister. A body canna blame the laddie. It's a heap better than his fa'in' in luv wi' her."

"Perhaps it is," groaned Isabel.

When mother had gone to bed my wife said :

"Mrs. Wade has been here to-day to ask Watty *and Mary* to a young people's dance on Friday night."

"What did you say?"

"I told her I wasn't going to dress that girl up and send her out to parties to be snubbed and slighted by the other girls, as she was at the dancing school ball. She said that if I let Mary go she'd see that she had a good time. For her part, she admired the way I'd stuck up for the girl in spite of everything ; and if she was good enough to live with us as a daughter, it would surely not

contaminate anybody else to meet her out of an evening."

Saturday night I inquired of Belle how Mary got on at the party.

"First rate. Mrs. Wade met her at the door of the drawing room and kissed her. 'How you've grown, Mary!' said she, and then she took her round and introduced her to all the girls in the room, including some of those who've been cutting her right and left, as well as to every boy she didn't know already. Of course she danced every dance, and had the best time going."

"And, of course, she put it all down to her own superior attractions?"

"Just exactly. This morning she didn't want to help me make the beds!"

Mary's Christmas present had been a beautiful silver-plated cornet, and of course she must learn

to play it when she went back to the convent. Word came shortly that the music master employed there could not undertake to teach her to play the instrument, but that a "professor" could be secured to go out from Detroit twice a week—if desired. We seemed to be in for it, so the lessons were desired, and we comforted ourselves with the assurance that if Mary did not turn out to be a tiptop reciter she would surely prove a tiptop cornet player. Her unusual talent would justify my wife in her unusual step, and the society of Lake City would forgive her for attempting to thrust the girl into its midst as an equal. Many of our acquaintances seemed to take mother's view of the case,—“Matter out of place becomes *dirrt!*”—and Belle was put on her mettle to convince the majority that she had done exactly the right thing in thus disclassing people. Dis-

classing people? In a free republic!

We received glowing accounts of the cornet lessons.

"Dear girl!" said Belle enthusiastically. "She must have the real artistic temperament to be so determined to excel in one or other of the arts."

"She's dramatic, anyway," said I, and I was confirmed in my opinion along in the spring, when the cornet, and aught else, appeared to have palled upon the versatile Mary. She wrote that she had serious thoughts of taking the veil.

"Bah!" said I; "what's she after now? She wants to scare us into something."

Belle wrote privately to the Lady Superior, telling her that if she considered Mary would be a desirable acquisition to their ranks she had no sort of objection to her joining them.

The good sister replied that

Miss Gemmell had not a grain of the stuff of which nuns are made, that her leanings were all in a worldly direction.

"No hope in that quarter!" laughed I, but Belle chided me for making fun of Mary in her absence.

When "Miss Mamie Gemmell" joined us at Interlaken for the summer her convent manners lasted for about two weeks, and then gave place to those of a spoiled and pampered daughter of the house.

We in America are accustomed to disrespectfulness and waywardness in our own children, but to notice the same attitude in a little nobody from nowhere we have taken in out of charity, makes a man or woman stand aghast.

"I don't believe she cares a straw for me personally," Belle would say sometimes, "but I must confess I like her better than the cringing, fawning variety."

She's outspoken in her impertinent demands."

After a very hot week in July I joyfully took the train on Saturday afternoon for the five miles' ride to Interlaken, and went to sleep that night with my ears full of the sound of waves and pine trees; my heart filled with the satisfaction of knowing that I had a whole round day ahead of me—a sunrise and a sunset at either end.

I omitted the sunrise part of the programme, but between ten and eleven I was ready for a walk down the pier to watch the bathers. American women are seldom plump enough to stand the undress uniform of a bathing costume. They run to extremes—become very stout indeed, or else very thin, but in girlhood the tendency is to over-slimness.

I was thinking what a contrast our summer girls would present

to a group of Scotch lasses, though, to be sure, I was never privileged to see any of the latter in bathing-dress, when a well-rounded apparition in sky blue luster and no bathing cap emerged from one of the disrobing houses. This damsel betook herself boldly to the pier, instead of splashing around the edge of the sand as the others were doing, and, coming near the end, took a run and then a beautiful header into the deep blue water.

She had passed me too quickly to be recognized, but as her face appeared above the surface I saw it belonged to no other than our adopted daughter, for as such, at the moment, was I pleased to own her. She shook the water out of her ears, gave her knob of hair an extra twist, brushed back the ringlets that threatened her eyes, and looked as much at home as if there were eighteen feet of land, instead of eighteen feet of water below her.

There were several young men swimming about at the end of the wharf, and they declared with gusto that a springboard must be erected for "Miss Gemmell" at once. I declined to assist in breaking the Sabbath over any such pranks, but a couple of scantily clad, dripping youths arose from the deep and succeeded in loosening a heavy three-inch plank from the flooring of the wharf. This was projected well out over the water, and the fair Mary was induced to ascend and exhibit therefrom. I did not approve at all, but thought it my duty to remain as chaperon until Belle and another lady, whom I perceived walking leisurely out the pier, should arrive.

The young men sprang back into the water to be on the reception committee, and Mary teetered on the far end of the plank. There was heard a loud, suggestive *crack*, and she leaped into

space in a most graceful semicircle before touching the water; but that awful board, the instant her weight was removed, rose straight up in the air, nearly knocked me off the dock, and with a groan slid through the opening whence it had been raised, into the depths below.

Belle rushed to my rescue, while the other woman stood still and shrieked.

"Nobody hurt!" called out from the water a nice-looking lad who was swimming beside Mary, and apparently daring her to further exploits.

"Who is the young man?" I asked my wife, being ready to change the subject from my own narrow escape.

"You mean the one with the Burne Jones head and the sleepy blue eyes that's round with Mary all the time? His name's Flaker, and he's a medical student from Chicago. That's all I know about

him." But she was destined to hear more, as we sat on the hotel veranda that night, from two old ladies inside the open window and closed blind.

"Isn't it scandalous," said one, "the way Mrs. Gemmell tries to shove that girl forward on every occasion?"

"Yes," said the other. "The old friendship between her and Mrs. Martin is all broken up since she tried so hard to get Lincoln Todd entangled with her last summer, and now she's doing her best to catch young Flaker."

"I don't believe he has any idea who the girl is, or rather who she is not."

"No, indeed, and his people would be in a great state if they knew the sort of company he was keeping."

"Who are they?"

"Don't you know? His father is Dr. Flaker, who has that fine mansion on the Grand Boule-

vard, and his mother belongs to one of the best New York families. They're all as proud as Lucifer."

"I think it is time we went home, David. Listeners never hear any good of themselves," said Belle, loudly enough to arrest the attention of the two dames.

Walking over the dried-up moonlit grass to our cottage, I threatened to go back and give them a piece of my mind, but my wife said:

"Maybe I did need a slight reminder. I haven't paid much attention to Mary's goings-on this summer. I must talk to Mr. Flaker the first chance."

The opportunity came before the evening was over, while I was in my pet hammock round the corner of the cottage, and Belle in a rocking-chair at the front.

"Good-evening, Mr. Flaker," I

heard her say. "I don't think you've ever seen the inside of our cottage. Won't you step in for a moment, now that it is lighted up?"

The moment satisfied him, for he speedily returned to the veranda.

"I never saw such a beautiful swimmer as Miss Gemmell," said the mannish voice, and Belle replied impressively:

"I believe you are not aware, Mr. Flaker, that the young lady you call Miss Gemmell is not my own daughter."

"Your stepchild is she, or your husband's niece?"

"Neither. She is no relation at all—just a poor girl whom I have taken up to educate. She can barely read or write. I felt that I ought to tell you this because you have been paying her a good deal of attention."

"Indeed, Mrs. Gemmell, I admire Miss Gemmell very much ;

but I assure you I never regarded her as anything else than a pleasant summer acquaintance."

And Mary was dropped forthwith.





CHAPTER V.

THE winter of 1892-93 Mary spent at home with us. Her first expressed wish, when the family returned from Interlaken, was to be confirmed, and the Rev. Mr. Armstrong of the church we do not attend was duly notified.

“He says I must be christened first,” said Mary. “Would you mind if he called me ‘Mary Gemmell’? There aint any name that I’ve a right to, and I don’t want to be called ‘Mason,’ because that’s the name of the woman that abused me when I was little. I’d rather have yours.”

She was such a pathetic-looking young person, standing there before Belle in her fresh and innocent loveliness, that my wife had not the heart to refuse her anything.

When I came home that same evening there was a *tableau vivant* in front of the parlor fire. Dressed in white, Mary sat on a low stool at the feet of the Rev. Walter Armstrong, her hands clasped in her lap, gazing up into the clean-shaven clerical face, with that which passed for her soul in her eyes. In spite of his stiff round collar and long black coat the rector is a young man, and I saw that he was impressed.

"You understand, do you, Mary," he said tenderly, "that when you are received into the Church you have God for your Father and Christ for your Elder Brother?"

"Yes, I understand, Mr. Armstrong," replied the girl earnestly.

"And that's just what I always wanted—was to have '*folks*.'"

I retired in haste to the dining room, where Isabel was brimming over with a new scheme.

"I've always found the house-keeping a drag, and it becomes more so every year as my outlook broadens. I want to keep up to the times, but I never have any leisure for reading, and our four eldest being boys, there seemed to be no hope for years of having any one to relieve me."

"Mary's a godsend," said I.

"I wish you really thought that, as I do. She's quick and adaptable, and I'm going to hand over to her a weekly allowance and let her keep the house on it."

"What about her accomplishments—the elocution and the cornet?"

"They can stand in the meantime. Do you know, Davie," hesitatingly, "I'm beginning to

be afraid she hasn't a good ear for music."

"Why?"

"The other night when the Mortons were in she sat and talked to Frank Wade the whole time Eva was playing."

"That's nothing. Everyone else did the same."

"But for a girl who is trying to pose as a cornet player, who thinks she might earn her living leading a church choir with one, it's bad policy, to say the least of it."

"Earn her living! I asked Joe Mitchell, when he was listening to her practicing out in the summer-house, what he thought of her playing, and he said she'd better keep to a penny whistle."

"Very rude of him!"

"No, it wasn't. I asked him point blank if I should be justified in paying for the more lessons she wants, and he said decidedly I should not."

"Well," said Belle wearily, "we'll try the housekeeping. That's a woman's true vocation, according to orthodox ideas. I shouldn't have set my heart on Mary turning out to be anything extraordinary. If she'll only be kind of half decent, and help me out with the housework, I'll be more than satisfied."

The sense of power gave new brightness to Mary's fair face, and her step through the house was of the lightest during the next week or two, but the boys rebelled in turn.

"*Mamma!* Mary's locked the pantry. Must we go to her for the key whenever we want anything?"

"I call it a mean shame!" from Joe.

"What were you doing?"

"We didn't do nothin', on'y eat up the pie she meant for dessert. I'm sure Margaret wouldn't mind makin' another."

"Mary's perfectly right, boys; I've indulged you too much."

Then it was Watty who complained :

"Mary says she won't have us mussing up the parlor after she's tidied it, and that we've got to change our boots when we come into the house." Or Chrissie :

"Mary says I'm big enough now to keep my own room in order, and she aint going to do it any more. She's wors'en grandma!"

To their grandma did they go with their woes when they found their mother so unaccountably obdurate, but they did not get much comfort there. Detest Mary as she might, my poor mother is always loyal to the powers that be, and she told the children :

"Yer mither kens fine what she's aboot, an' ye needna fash yer heids tae come cryin' tae me."

She even went so far as to back Mary up in her suggestion that

the boys should eat what was set before them, asking no questions.

“That’s the w’y yer faither was brocht up. If he didna finish his parritch in the mornin’, they were warmed up for him again at nicht. Ye tak’ but a spinfu’ ’at ye could hardly ca’ parritch, for they’re jist puzhioned wi’ sugar.”

Mary was not naturally fond of children, and, having entered our family full-grown, she found it hard to put up with the freaks of our six, there being no foundation of sisterly love upon which to build toleration.

Belle’s housekeeping had always been lavish. She ordered her groceries wholesale, and when they were done never inquired what had become of them.

“I decline to go into details—life is too short! I don’t know where my patience ends and my laziness begins, but I’d rather be cheated than lock things up, or try to keep track of what Mar-

garet wastes. She's not an ideal 'general,' but it's only one in a hundred that would stand the children pottering about in the kitchen so much."

After the time-worn custom of new brooms, Mary made a bold attempt to record each item of expenditure, and ordered what she wanted from day to day; but there was no calculating the appetites of four growing boys, especially when, as Mary affirmed, they sometimes over-ate themselves just to spite her.

"We're living from hand to mouth, *papa*," they would say, when an unwonted scarcity occurred.

Truth to tell, I began to sympathize with my revolting sons when I brought an old friend home with me to dinner one day, and went to announce the fact to our "housekeeper."

"I just wish that Bob Mansell would quit coming here so much

when he's not expected. There's only enough pudding for ourselves."

"Mary," said I sternly, "Mr. Mansell's been coming to this house before you were here, and he'll keep on coming after you're gone, if you're not careful."

It was the first time I had ever spoken sharply to her, and I flattered myself that I had done some good, though she held her head high and left the room.

Belle came to the conclusion that the housekeeping scheme did not work smoothly, and she resumed the reins of government. Mary was still supposed to do the work of a second maid, but it was evident that her heart was not in it.

"What does Mary want now?" I asked my wife when she took her usual seat beside me, as I lay on the sofa with my pipe.

"She thinks she'd like to go to the Boston School of Oratory to

prepare herself to be a public reader."

"Is it necessary that she should be before the public in one way or another?"

"She doesn't seem to be much of a success in private life."

"In that respect she's no worse than half the girls in town. None of them dote on housework."

"But, considering that this girl has no earthly claim on us, you'd think she might be different."

"Don't be angry, Belle, at my saying so, but you've only yourself to thank for that. You've been most anxious that Mary should be just like one of ourselves—should not feel that she was accepting charity, and you've succeeded only too well. The girl takes everything you do for her as her right, and asks for more."

"Well, what about Boston?"

"I think it would be arrant folly to send her there. How do

we know she has any more talent for elocution than for music?"

"She has the desire to learn. I suppose that's a sign of the ability."

"She has an intense desire for admiration, that's about the size of it. To be the center of all eyes, giving a recitation in a drawing room, pleases her down to the ground, but it doesn't follow that she would be a success professionally."

"I dare say we've spent about as much on her education as you care to do just now."

"We have indeed!"

My wife and I are much in demand at all the social functions of our town, and, though I accompany her under protest, I confess that, once the affair is in full swing, I enjoy as much as anybody a hand at "Pedro" or a dance.

The houses of our city are mostly wooden and mostly new,

for an annual conflagration keeps building brisk. Hardwood floors and mantels are the order of the day, and if some of our lumbermen and their wives have not a command of English grammar in keeping with their horses, their sealskins, and their diamonds, they have a heartier than an English welcome—except, of course, for guests of such questionable antecedents as our Mary.

Mrs. David Gemmell is a bright and witty woman, though I say it, who should not. But why should I not? She did not inherit her wits from me. Mrs. David Gemmell let the leading ladies of the town understand that unless Mary was invited to everything that was going on, we stayed away ourselves. Lake City society could not proceed without Isabel, so the "white elephant" was received in her train, and truly she did us credit in company, if nowhere else. She was always stylishly

dressed, and her dancing was a joy forever. We did not marvel when Will Axworthy, the most eligible young man about, took it into his head to introduce the german to our benighted citizens, that he chose Mary for his partner to lead it with him. She had private lessons from himself, as well as from the dancing master, and proud and happy were Belle and I to sit at the side of the ballroom and watch her going through the figures and bestowing her favors with all the grace and dignity of one of the four hundred.

"She shall go to Boston tomorrow, if she wants to," said I, but this time Belle demurred.

"I think she seems likely to have a good time here this winter, and we may as well let her have her fling."

The prophecy was fulfilled. In spite of the supreme jealousy of the other girls, who could not say mean enough things about her,

Mary became quite the rage with the young men.

One Sunday afternoon Will Axworthy called. He is short and broad, has reddish hair and a chronic blush hardly to be looked for in the Ward McAllister of Lake City. Too nervously did he plant himself in my frisky spring rocker, and therefore involuntarily did he present the soles of his boots to the assembled family, while his head bumped the wall, to the huge delight of our boys!

Undaunted by that inauspicious beginning, he came again the next Sunday, smoked my best cigars, and talked lumber, the one subject upon which he is posted, for he was the manager of a mill here.

He stayed to supper that evening and went with Mary to church afterward. Then he called for her with a cutter the first bright day, and took her sleigh riding. The embryo wrinkle left Belle's forehead.

"Do you really think he means anything?" said she.

"Don't be too sanguine about it. Nowadays, young men pay a girl a great deal of attention with nothing in their heads but a good time."

"Still, Axworthy's no boy. He's thirty if he's a day, and he has a good salary, and can afford to marry whenever the mood takes him."

"Let us hope and pray that it may take him soon!"

"Amen!" said Belle solemnly.

The daily friction with her *protégée* was becoming too much for the good-natured patience even of my better half. Acting upon generous impulses is all very fine, but they need to be backed up by a large amount of endurance and tolerance if the results are to be successfully dealt with.

From my vantage-ground on the nursery sofa, behind my screen of newspaper, I frequently hear

more than is suspected by the family.

"Mary, you're not going to the rink to-night!" in Belle's most imploring tone.

"Yes, mawm, I am. Lend me your wrench, Watty."

"Mary, I positively forbid you to go to the rink!"

"Well, I do think that's just too mean for anything. Every girl in town goes."

"Every girl in town doesn't skate with barber, or bandsman, or anybody who comes along, as you do."

"Watty's been telling!"

"Watty hasn't been telling!" broke in our eldest son in indignant protest, which he further emphasized by going out and banging the door after him.

"And, Mary," Belle continued, "are you engaged to Mr Axworthy?"

"No!" sullenly.

"Then if I were you I wouldn't

let him kiss me when he says 'Good-night' at the door after bringing you home from a party."

"You're old-fashioned. All the girls do it!"

"No *lady* would permit a man to take such a liberty. You're spoiling your chances with Mr. Axworthy, I can tell you. I never knew a man yet that would bind himself to a girl when he could have all the privileges of an engaged man, and none of the responsibilities."

"I don't care anything at all about him. I don't want to marry him. He's just giving me a good time."

A good time he undoubtedly did give her throughout the winter. To the smartest balls and parties he was her escort, and she always wore the roses he never neglected to send. Every Sunday about dusk he would come round to our house, and, martyrs to a good cause, Isabel, mother,



and I vacated the cozy parlor with its easy chairs and blazing fire for the nursery—always uproarious with children on that day.

“I wonder what those two find to talk about,” speculated Belle. “Mary has no conversation at all, and Axworthy hasn’t much more.”

“Perhaps he takes it out in looking at her. By the way, Belle, when are you going to appear in the new dress I gave you that fifty dollars to buy? I am quite tired of the mauve tea gown.”

My wife glanced over her shoulder to make sure that Grandma was out of hearing.

“The truth is, Dave, I thought I must wait to see how much of it I had left after getting Mary rigged up for the Robinsons’ dance. She goes out so often that she needs a change of evening dress.”

“Did she ask for it?”

“Not directly, but she remarked that she didn’t see what I wanted

with a new black silk, that I had plenty of clothes, and that when she was my age she didn't think she'd bother about what she had to wear."

I sprang up from the sofa, prepared to shove Mary out of the house, neck and crop, but Belle's outburst of laughter calmed me.

"Her cheek is so great that it passes from the ridiculous to the sublime!"

"Why do you stand it, Belle? You wouldn't from anybody else."

"I can't very well go back on her at this stage, and send her about her business. She's shrewd enough to know that."

"People would laugh; that's so!"

"Besides, if she marries Axworthy, she'll be our social equal here in this town, and it must never be in her power to say that we did not treat her well."

"What is the prospect with Axworthy?"

“Good, I think. He is thoroughly kind to her, and he has given me plenty of hints about the state of his affections, hopes by another winter that Mary will have somebody else to look after her, and so on. He is always most particular in seeing that she is well wrapped up, and that is highly necessary, for she is extremely careless about how she goes out. In spite of a certain amount of physical dash, she isn’t a bit strong; has no staying power.”

“It won’t be much fun for Axworthy to be saddled with a delicate wife.”

“Well, I guess he needs some discipline, just as much as I do. I’ve had my share out of Miss Mary for the last three years, and I am quite willing to let somebody else have a turn. He walks into this thing with his eyes open. He knows her history.”

“But does he know her disposition?”

"Let him find that out—if he can. Most mothers don't think it necessary to tell their daughters' suitors how the girls get on with them in the house."

"You say she has no constitution. Supposing he does marry her, how about the possible children? What have they done that they should have Mary for a mother?"

"That's exactly the right way to put it—what have they done? We don't know, but they must have gone far astray last time, if they are given such a bad start this incarnation."

Will Axworthy left town in the spring. Lumber was done in our part of Michigan and he had to follow it further south. He and Mary corresponded, for I caught Belle in the act of correcting one of her letters.

"Do you think that's quite fair to Axworthy? If they become engaged, the first unedited letter

he gets from Mary will be considerable of a surprise to him."

"Don't you bother your old head, Dave! I'm running this thing! He's arranging to meet us in Chicago, and hopes to have the pleasure of showing Mary the Columbian Exhibition. Something is sure to happen while we're there!"





CHAPTER VI.

ALL winter we had been talking about the Fair, reading up about the Fair, making plans for the Fair; and Belle declared that even if she never saw the Fair she would be glad it had been, on account of the amount of preparatory information she had laid up.

We did get off at last in the end of June, the whole of us, including Mary, of course—my first experience of traveling in her company. We went to Chicago by boat,—a night's crossing,—and a rare time I had securing berths for the family in the overcrowded propeller. I was thankful for an

"extension," a sort of shell run out between two staterooms and partitioned off by curtains and poles. The boys had to sleep on sofas, floor, anywhere, which to them was but the beginning of the fun.

The first of my Herculean labors at an end, I was enjoying my smoke aft in the cool of the evening, when Belle came back to me, her brow drawn up into what I had begun to call the "Mary wrinkle."

"David, I'm afraid you'll have to talk to that girl. She's sitting up in the bow there flirting with one of the waiters, and though I've sent Watty twice after her, she won't stir."

As majestically as my five feet four would permit, I moved to the front of the boat.

"Mary, Mrs. Gemmell wants you right away."

She took time to exchange a laughing farewell with the good-

looking waiter, and explained to me *en route* :

"That's Bill Moreland. I knew him quite well in Lake City. I've met him at balls."

In the morning before we reached Chicago, she managed to get in a long confabulation with another waiter, whom I am sure she had never met in Lake City, nor anywhere else.

"See here, Mary! If this is the way you're going to behave, you go straight back to Lake City on that boat, and don't see one bit of the Fair."

Her manners were mended till we were actually in Jackson Park, but then :

"She's a philanthropist, Belle, a lover of *mankind*—Columbian Guard, Gospel Charioteer, Turk in the bazaar. The creed or the color doesn't matter so long as he calls himself a man."

I am afraid I was cross, for it did not take one day to realize

what an undertaking it was going to be to keep track of my family, who had never before seemed too numerous. Daily at 10 A. M., in the Michigan Building, did I hand over to Will Axworthy the most troublesome of the lot, and daily did I wish he would keep her for better or worse.

On the Fourth of July cannonading began at daybreak, and for once I sympathized in my mother's objection to the license accorded to young Americans. They set off firecrackers, not by the bunch but by the bushel; kerosene and dynamite were their ambrosia and nectar. What with fighting for lunch in overcrowded restaurants, and then retaliating by stealing chairs out of the same, hunting through the various booths in the Midway to collect my three younger sons when it was time to send them home, and rescuing my two little girls from an over-supply of ice cream sodas

and chocolate drops, I did not specially enjoy the glorious Fourth.

Toward evening there was not a foot of Fair ground undecorated by a banana skin, a crust of bread, or a flying paper. Belle considered the signs "Keep off the Grass" quite superfluous, and pulling one up by the roots she sat down on it, thereby keeping the letter, if not the spirit of the law.

"Now, Dave," said she, "the family are all safe off the grounds, and you can go and get a gondola to come and take us for a sail before dark. Everybody is moving toward the lake front to wait for the fireworks, and the lagoons are not so crowded as they were. Let's pretend we're on our honeymoon."

So seldom does Belle wax sentimental over me, I hailed her proposition with outward indifference but inward joy. Securing a gon-

dola to ourselves, in it we were gently swayed through canal and under bridge in the mystical evening light.

The distant rumble of a train on the Intramural, or a quack from a sleepy duck among the rushes, alone broke the stillness.

"This is where I belong!" exclaimed Belle. "I've seen before those Eastern-looking towers and minarets, with the sunset glow on the cloud masses behind them. Look! there's a Turk and a Hindoo crossing the bridge. This is the region, this the soil, the clime. I always knew I wasn't meant for Western America."

"You must have been very naughty *last time* to have been raised in Michigan this trip. Still this is only Chicago!"

"It's not Chicago! It's the world! Listen to that now—the music of the spheres!"

We approached another gondola that had withdrawn itself

from the center of the channel close in to a small island. The man at the stern was doing nothing very picturesquely, but the man at the bow, a swarthy Venetian, was pouring out his soul in an aria from "*Cavalleria Rusticana*." His voice might not have passed muster at Covent Garden, but in the unique stage setting, which included a group of eager listeners on a bridge behind him, one could forgive a break on a high note or two.

The singer threw himself into the spirit of the composition, cast his eyes upward with hand on his heart, and bent them to earth again for the approval of his passengers. There were but two, a young man and a young lady, and to the latter was the hero in costume directing his amorous glances.

"There's romance for you!" said I to Belle, who is notoriously on the lookout for it. I directed

our gondolier to draw nearer to his enamoured compatriot. My wife replied uneasily :

“ I don’t know the man, or boy, for that’s all he is, but if that isn’t Mary’s hat——”

“ Mary! Phew! What’s become of Axworthy?”

As we approached the comfortable-looking pair, Mary bowed to us smilingly, and called the attention of her companion to her “father and mother”—darn her impudence!

The boat ride was spoiled for Belle and me, our white elephant having arisen to haunt us once more. We landed and walked over to the lake front, where the whole slope was packed with people waiting for the fireworks to begin.

Someone started to sing “Way Down upon the Swanee Ribber,” and everybody joined in. “Nearer, my God, to Thee” was also most impressive from the

vast impromptu chorus. In the foreground Lake Michigan lay darkly expectant, with a large black cloud upon its horizon, though the stars shone overhead. A half-circle of boats extended from the long Exhibition Wharf on the right, round to the warship *Illinois* on the left, and from the latter a search light, an omnipresent eye, swept the crowd with rapidly veering glance, till it concentrated its gaze on the dark balloon which rose so mysteriously from the water. Suddenly from this balloon was suspended the Stars and Stripes in colored lights. The crowd cheered like mad, the boats whistled, and sent up rockets galore.

On went the programme. Bombs tested the strength of our wearied ear-drums, fiery snakes sizzled through the air, big wheels spurted brilliant marvels, and along the very edge of the lake, to the great discomfort of the front

rows of the stalls, a line of combustibles behaved like gigantic footlights on a spree.

"David, who do you suppose that was with Mary?"

I had been up in the air with George Washington, surrounded by "First in War, First in Peace, etc.," in letters of fire, and I was unwillingly recalled to earth.

"Haven't the remotest idea. Hope she hasn't given Axworthy the slip."

"I'm only hoping that he has not given her the slip. I'd never have brought her to the Fair if he hadn't agreed to look after her."

At that moment there was a surging of the mighty crowd, caused by a band of college students pushing their way through, shoulder to shoulder, singing one of their rousing ditties. Some people who had been standing on their hired rolling chairs had narrow escapes from being flung upon the shoulders of those

in front. Some did not escape—Mary for instance, who landed between us as if shot from a catapult.

“I knew I was going to fall, so I just jumped to where I seen you two,” said she, with her customary calmness, and then she turned to assure her escort of the gondola, who was anxiously elbowing his way to her, that she was entirely unhurt.

Blushing prettily, she introduced the lad as “Mr. Tom Axworthy—cousin of the Mr. Axworthy you know.”

Mr. Tom talked to Mrs. Gemmell with the ease and assurance of ninety rather than nineteen, while I exchanged a few words aside with the maiden:

“Where is the Mr. Axworthy that we know?”

“He had some business to do in town to-night, so he left me in charge of this cousin of his—just a lovely fellow!”

"Humph! Introduced you to any more of his relations?"

"Oh, yes—an uncle; quite an old bachelor, but lovely too!"

"And I suppose you've been round with the uncle as well."

"Not very much. He was to have taken me up in the balloon yesterday, but the cyclone burst it."

"We're going home now, and I think you'd better say 'Good-night' to Mr. Tom Axworthy and come with us."

After waiting two hours and a half for standing room on a suburban train, we reached the hotel at an early hour on July the 5th, dusty, smoke-stained, and powder-scented, like veterans from a field of battle.

That was not by any means the last of Mr. Tom Axworthy. During the remainder of our stay in Chicago it was he quite as frequently as his more mature and eligible cousin who exchanged a

lingering farewell with Mary at the ladies' entrance to our hotel, and a great fear arose in the heart of Belle that the young woman was fooling away her time with this impecunious boy, instead of making the most of her opportunities to come to a satisfactory understanding with his cousin. Every morning did she gaze pathetically into my face, saying :

"I do hope Axworthy will propose to-day!" and once she added :

"I cannot face another winter in the same house with that girl and your mother. Grandma has taken it into her head that Mary is my pet lamb, the idol of my heart, for whom she, and you too, have been set aside. She doesn't see that it worries me half to death to have Mary tagging round after me the whole time, and overrunning the house with her beaux. Neither of our own girls is old enough yet, thank

goodness, to consider herself my companion and equal, to wear my gloves, my boots, my best hair-pins, and to use my favorite perfume; to come and plant herself down beside me whenever I'm talking confidentially to anyone, to be determined to have her finger into every pie, to know what I'm reading or thinking about. She'll insist on knowing my dreams next!"

"Perhaps you mesmerize her."

"If I did, I'd make her keep away from me! I could stand it all better if I thought she really cared a straw for me, but I have the feeling that she regards me merely as a basis for supplies."

"We can only trust, then, that the basis may be speedily transferred to Axworthy!"

On our return from the World's Fair, the family stopped off at Interlaken, but I had to go on into town to the *Echo* office. To

my surprise, Mary joined me at my solitary dinner at the "House of the Seven Gables," where Margaret, as usual, was in charge, and she remained there for the rest of the week.

"Where's Mary?" was Belle's greeting, when I joined her on Saturday.

"She's in town."

"Why didn't you bring her out with you?"

"Didn't know you wanted her. She said she'd like to stay in Lake City over Sunday, to take the Communion."

"Take the Communion indeed! She wants to be left there alone with Margaret, so that she'll have a chance to flirt with every man in town. I thought you had more sense, David."

I pulled my soft felt hat further over my diminished head.

"Did she get any letters?"

"One or two."

"Wretch! I told her to come

out here with you to-night for certain."

Monday morning, mother, who had been spending the summer with my married sister in Lake City, came out to stay for a week with us at Interlaken.

She could hardly wait till the youngsters were out of hearing to pour her story into my ears. I had to take back to town the train by which she had come out, but she made the most of her time.

"There's been great doin's in yer hoose in yer absence. Marg'et's been tellin' yer sister's servant a' aboot Mary's luv affairs. Mary tell't her 'at Eesabelle bade her write Willum Axworthy an' spier his intentions; that if she didna, Mrs. Davvit said she'd d'it hersel'. An' a' the time she's correspondin' wi' a yunger ane, an Axworthy tae, 'at she tells Marg'et she likes a hape better. Yer sister's sair affronted to think o'

the w'y the fem'ly name's bein' cairted thro' the mire."

Belle came out on the veranda, her broad hat in her hand, ready to walk down to the train with me.

"So Axworthy didn't propose at the Fair?" said I, when we were out of earshot of the cottage.

"No; and I think it's a crying shame, too, after the way he appropriated the girl all last winter, and in Chicago too."

"A great relief to you! Well, I guess the whole town knows by this time that you made Mary write and ask his intentions."

"This is too much! Has your mother——"

"Mary's been making a *confidante* of Margaret, that's all. That inestimable domestic is so much one of ourselves, it was hard for the unsophisticated mind to know exactly where to draw the line."

"I hope she has drawn the line

at showing Margaret his reply. I haven't seen that myself."

"What can you expect it to be? If he had wanted to marry the girl there was nothing to prevent him asking her, and if he did not, no letter of yours would make him want to."

"She wrote it herself, and all she said was that she would like to know definitely how she stood with him. I did nothing but correct the spelling."

"Better if you had written in your own name, and without her knowledge. No daughter of the house would ever have been put in such a position. So far as I can judge, Mary and Mr. Will Axworthy are quits. If he has had a good time in her society, she has had an equally good time in his, and he does not enjoy her letters so much as he did her propinquity."

"He's a cold-hearted, cowardly——"

"Tut! tut! my dear!"

By this time we were on the platform, and the engine was backing its one car down to receive me and the other unhappy toilers compelled to go away and leave that sapphire-blue lake behind.

"Don't you think, Isabel, that it's about time you quit trying to play Providence and gave God a chance?"

"Dave! you're blasphemous!"

"No, I'm not. I only wish to remark that in your schemes for the welfare of one particular person, you are apt to overlook the comfort and happiness of everyone else concerned. That's the worst of not being omniscient. You're only an amateur sort of a deity after all."

"Send that girl out here by the very next train." And I obeyed.



CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER week of night work, and then the sunniest of Sundays on the shore of old Lake Michigan.

I noticed that Mary was in deep disgrace with my wife, who would hardly speak to her, and I judged therefore that Mr. Will Axworthy had not been brought to time.

I am not a venturesome boatman, and generally confine my aquatic outings to the smaller lake, but that Saturday night there was not a breath of wind, and the water was placidity personified, so I drifted in my small skiff through the channel that connects the smaller with the larger body of

water. On the sandy point jutting out at the mouth, upon an old stump, sat a solitary maiden, the picture of woe.

"Hello, Mary!" said I, ignoring the tears; "want to go for a boat ride?"

"I don't care if I do," she replied, seating herself in the stern, which I turned toward her.

Silently I pulled out into the big lake, where the copper-colored sun going down in a haze near the horizon bade us beware of a hot day on the morrow. Out of the lake to the right rose the full moon, failing as yet to make her gentle influence felt against the radiant glow the sun was leaving behind him.

"So Axworthy's gone back on you, Mary?"

The fountains played again.

"Yes; and it aint the first time I've got left, neither."

With Mrs. Mason, the Ferguson Family, Lincoln Todd, and young



Flaker on the tablets of my mind,
I could truthfully assent to that
remark.

"Still, it may be just the making of you in the long run."

"I'm not breakin' my heart over Will Axworthy; didn't care nothing 'tall 'bout him, on'y I'd got used havin' him round, and I'd have married him if he asked me. I think a sight more of his cousin."

"The boy we saw at the Fair?"

"Yes. He's written me a lovely letter. Would you mind reading it aloud to me? Some of the big words I couldn't make out, and neither could Margaret. I wrote him all myself!"

Never before had it fallen to my lot to play father confessor to a lady in love difficulties, but the editorial mind is equal to any emergency, so I let my oars slide and adjusted my reading-glasses to peruse Mary's precious epistle.

When I had read on to the

signature. "Your devoted lover 'Tom,'" Mary's face was radiant.

"Aint he smart? You know he was at the Fair, reporting for a newspaper."

"That explains his glibness. Don't have anything to do with him, Mary. He's just trying to draw you on. The burnt dog should dread the fire."

"But he admires me, don't he?"

"He says so, but he is much more anxious that you should admire him. Why, it's part of his business to keep his hand in by being in love, or rather by having some silly little fool of a girl in love with him. You'll just get left again if you encourage this young scamp."

April showers once more.

"I think the best thing I can do is to jump overboard here into Lake Michigan. It don't seem to me I'm wanted anywheres."

"That might do very well, but

you're too good a swimmer to drown easily, and you'd catch on to my boat and upset me. I can't swim a stroke, and there'd be five—six young Gemmells and a widow and a mother cast upon the world. No, we'll have to think of something better than that."

Mary's laughter was always quick on the heels of her tears.

"What do you think I'm good for, anyhow?"

"I can testify that you're not a success as a housekeeper."

"Nor a nursemaid."

"And as a lady's companion you're not all that could be desired, even if there were a demand for the article in West Michigan."

"As a gentleman's companion I am all right," and the girl showed her perfect teeth in a smile.

"It's no joking matter, Mary. You're not very happy in our house, and things will be worse for you next winter, with no Will

Axworthy coming to see you, and no engagement to him in prospect. What do you think yourself that you're fit for—putting reciting and cornet playing out of the question?"

The young lady rested her chin on the palm of her hand and composed her face into a bewitching expression of profound meditation.

"I can't teach, and I can't sew, and I can't cook. I couldn't bear sitting still all day at a typewriter, and there's no room in the telephone office. You know quite well that there aint a thing for girls like me to do but to get married. That's why God made us pretty, so's we'd have a good chance."

"Don't be flippant, miss. How do you think you'd like to be an hospital nurse?"

"I dunno; I wouldn't mind trying. I'm generally good to folks—when they're sick—and I

aint a bit scared of dirty nor of dead ones. I laid out an old woman that died in the Refuge."

"You're not particularly thin-skinned, that's a fact; but it's the educational qualification I'd be afraid of. There's some sort of an examination to be passed before you can get into any of these Training Schools nowadays. I'll write for some forms of application, and we'll see. If once you were able to support yourself, you'd think very differently about marrying anybody that turned up, just for the sake of a home. Ours mayn't be much of a one for you, but marry to get out of it, and you'll perhaps find yourself out of the frying-pan into the fire."

"I think it would be just lovely to be a nurse! There was one came down from Chicago when Mrs. Wade was sick, and the uniform was awfully pretty. I'm sure it would suit me."

"It would be very becoming, I haven't any doubt of that; and when it's all settled that you are going to an hospital you can write in reply to Will Axworthy's last letter."

"He wanted me to keep on writing to him just the same; said he'd like always to be good friends with me."

"I wouldn't write him but once again, and do it all by yourself. Just say that the reason you wrote the other letter, asking how you stood with him, was that you had been thinking of leaving us altogether, but before taking the decided step of entering an hospital, you had thought it only fair to him to give him the chance to object, if he really had the objections he had led you to take for granted."

We heard a shouting and a blowing of tin horns upon the beach at this juncture. I took the oars and pulled in, seeing

Belle and the boys waving their hats in the bright moonlight. My wife's face expressed the blankest astonishment when she saw who was my shipmate.

"We thought you must have fallen asleep out there. Didn't know you had company!"

Mary was still in the black books when I came down the next Saturday. Belle had a bitter complaint.

"She sat there the whole afternoon yesterday and part of the evening, writing and rewriting a letter before my very eyes. 'Are you replying to Will Axworthy?' I asked quite cordially, for I did want to have a hand in answering that letter—had some cutting sentences all ready for him. 'Yes, mawm,' said she very shortly; 'but I guess I can manage to get along by myself.'"

I did not dare own up to the advice I had given, but I saw that matters must be hastened. Hav-

ing business in Chicago about that time, I visited almost every hospital in the city, telling Mary's story in my most dramatic newspaper style. I made it understood that it was very noble and self-sacrificing of the young woman, when she might live in the lap of luxury,—for thus did I unblushingly describe my own modest establishment,—to embrace a nurse's vocation and labor for the good of humanity, including herself, of course. The education—or the lack of it—was the drawback everywhere, and also the youth of the applicant, twenty-five being a more acceptable age than barely twenty-one.

But my perseverance was at last rewarded by finding the superintendent of a training school who still had some imagination left, and who became deeply interested in Mary's "tale of woe."

"Make her study her reading, spelling, and arithmetic as hard as

she can for the next few months, and I'll get her in the very first opening."

The prospect roused Belle's old-time vigor, and she had spelling matches for Mary's benefit, made the girl read aloud to her, gave her dictation to write, and heard her the multiplication tables every forenoon—when she did not forget.

One delightful morning in October I had the honor of taking our *protégée* into Chicago and delivering her up to the lady superintendent. If she could only stand the month of probation, we flattered ourselves that she would be safe.

Three weeks later I met the Rev. Mr. Armstrong on the street.

"I think it is only right to tell you what people are saying," said he.

"It's my business to know," I replied.

"I mean about your adopted

daughter. I have just been told by two reputable parties, one after the other, that she has been dismissed from the hospital for flirting, and that you and Mrs. Gemmell are hushing the matter up as well as you can, but that you don't know at all where she is."

When I reached home my first question was:

"Have you heard from Mary lately, Belle?"

"Not for a week, and I'm quite worried about her. Before that, she wrote to me dutifully every two or three days, telling me all about her work. I've kept on writing to her just the same, making excuses for her to herself, and never doubting her for a minute; but to tell you the truth, Dave, I'm getting dreadfully anxious."

Then I told her what I had heard.

"Don't you believe it, David! I never shall till I hear it from

herself. I know now for a certainty that I love that girl! I'll believe her before all the world! I'll stick by her through thick and thin! I'll not insult her by writing to the Hospital! What now matters the little inconveniences of living with her? What have a few clothes and toilet articles, more or less, to do with it? If she has failed, she shall come *home*, and we'll begin the three years' fight all over again. I'll sit down now and write her the nicest letter I can write."

That sounded very brave, but inwardly I knew that my wife suffered agonies the next few days.

"Perhaps if I had done this," she would say, "or if I had done that—it seems precisely like a death, and I've killed her."

Tuesday morning two letters came from Mary. They were hurriedly and excitedly written.

"My dear good mother, I am accepted! It is the happiest day of my life; it will be a red letter day for you! I love you. I have tried so hard for your sake; I have tried to make my life hear one long prayer and the dear Lord helps me. I did not write because the exam. was delayed, and I wanted to wait until I had something *good* to tell you. I look nice in the uniform. It is pink and a white cap, apron and cuffs. Oh I am so contented; this work is so filling. I never get lonely or homesick. *We* nurses had a party, and we danced and served ice cream, and there was some lovely doctors here, and the Princippal is so kind to us we have lots of fun"—and so the letters ran on.

The reaction was too much for Belle. She cried, then she laughed, then she fell on her knees and thanked God, and she told me

she added that, for pity's sake, He *must* set His angels to guard Mary, for she was a poor, frail child, who had got lost in coming this time, and many persecuted her because she was pretty, and might find a resting place and get a little of what rightfully (?) belonged to them.

After a while she went down to see Mr. Armstrong, and read him the letters. He turned very white.

"Oh, the pity of it!" said he.

"I wish I could gather her slanderers into one room and read them these letters," said Belle.

For days afterward she button-holed people in the street to tell them about Mary, or to read them scraps of her letters. If they had said she was vain and idle, and selfish and incompetent, just like the half of their own daughters, Belle could have forgiven them. It was their determination to shove her into the gutter

which made my wife her valiant champion.

"Whatever that girl amounts to, Dave, will be born of our faith in her, and we must never go back on her. She writes me that whenever she has a hard task, such as attending fits, there I stand at her back and help."

"Just between ourselves, though, you must confess that it is a great relief to have her away."

"You can't begin to feel that as I do. I live again! I read my own books, think my own thoughts. I belong to myself. No one says, 'What's the matter?' 'Where are you going?' 'What makes you grave—or gay?' I sit and chat with my 'odd-fish.' I go to all kinds of meetings and discuss all kinds of 'isms, and have no tag-tail constantly asking 'Why?' 'Why?' or 'Tell me!' It's the little things that grind. The next time

I try to help a young girl, I'll not risk losing my influence with her by taking her into my house. Do you know, Dave, I sometimes feel that Mary must have been my own child in a previous incarnation, and I neglected and abused her; that's why she was thrust back upon me this time, whether I liked it or not."

After Christmas Isabel decided that she must go up to Chicago to see Mary, and on her return thrilling was the account she gave of her experiences, which included an attendance at an autopsy—but upon that I shall not enlarge.

Introducing herself to the Superintendent of the School, she said:

"Can I have Miss Gemmell for two days at my hotel?"

"Indeed, no, madam. We are short of help, and it would be entirely against the rules."

"Then I'll stay here with her."

The Lady Superintendent looked distressed.

"Don't think us inhospitable, but there is absolutely no provision for guests in all this great building."

"Oh!" said Belle, unabashed. "I seem to be unfortunate in breaking, or wanting to break, the rules of this house. Now, will you kindly tell me what I can do? How can I see the very most of my Mary while I am in Chicago?"

After some thought the answer came:

"You may have Miss Gemmell to-morrow afternoon, and two hours on Sunday."

"That will not suit me at all! Now, please forget all that has been said, and I will tell you that I Mrs. David Gemmell of Lake City, Michigan, am a poor tired woman, threatened with nervous prostration, have already chills of apprehension running down my back, coupled with flushes of ex-

pectation to my head." By this time Mary, the Lady Superintendent, and two other nurses present were all attention, and Belle added gravely :

"I want one of your best private rooms on Corridor B, where Miss Gemmell is on duty, and I should like to see the House Surgeon at once."

So Belle was comfortably and luxuriously established in the hospital, and the only drawback was that she had to be served with her meals in her room.

"What feasts we had—Mary and I," she said. "What fun! Before I left I had demoralized that whole hospital staff, and broken every rule in the institution. It did them all good."

"I hope you haven't been indiscreet," said I.

"Indiscreet?"

"You must remember that Mary braced herself up to go to the hospital when she was 'out' with

you. Now you've gone and made so much of her that she'll think, whenever things become too hot for her, she has only to march straight back here again."

"She assures me she *will* graduate."

"There should never be any question of that."

"David, I've only told you the one side. If that girl were my very own I should pluck her out of that particular fire. I'd get down on my knees and beg her pardon for having thrown her into it. It burns up their youth, their bloom, their originality, their modesty. It thrusts the girls into a charnel house of sin, sickness, and death. It shatters the nervous system of nine out of ten, or it leaves them calm, steady, burnt-out women, who have been behind the scenes of life and are disillusioned. When that little pink and white thing sat there and told me of some of the awful

situations that she'd been placed in, and over which she was made responsible, the tears rolled down my face. I forgave her lots of things."

"Plenty of refined, educated women with a very different bringing up from Mary's go through the same."

"Well, I advised her to go on and finish the course, if only to show her friends, and enemies, the stuff she's made of. When I think of those free wards, and the menial, disgusting offices that frail little girl has to perform! What did she sow that she should reap this fighting in the thickest of the fight, so poorly equipped?"

"I dare say there are alleviations."

"Oh, yes! She flirts—says she'd die if she didn't—with every man in the place, from the elevator boy to the head doctor, and, really, I excused her. The head nurse in Mary's ward is very harsh

with her, but I let her and everyone in the place understand that Miss Gemmell is no stray waif without influence to back her. Every day I send out thought-waves—hypnotism—whatever you like to call it—to compel that Dean woman to think of something else than the making of trained nurses, and physical wrecks at the same time. People are greater than institutions.”

“The discipline will be the making of Mary.”





CHAPTER VIII.



URING the famous Pullman strike of last summer, duty bade me cross to Chicago in the interests of the *Echo*.

On Saturday afternoon, July the 7th, I was at the pulse of the Anarchist movement, near the corner of Loomis and Forty-ninth Streets. Taking up my stand in the deep entry of a "House to Let," I watched the operations of a body of strikers gathered round a box car close to the Grand Trunk crossing. They had set it afire, and were trying to overturn it upon the railway track, encouraged by the cheers of a mob numbering about two thousand men, women, and children.

The incendiaries were so much engrossed that they did not observe, backing swiftly down upon them, the wrecking train it was their purpose to block. While still in motion, the cars disgorged Captain Kelly and his company, who had been guarding the Pan Handle tracks all day, but had not yet, it seemed, earned their night's repose.

The crowd greeted the soldiers with stones, brickbats, and pieces of old iron, but the car burners proceeded with their little job, paying no attention at all to the approach of the military.

A pistol bullet out of the mob swished in among his men, and then Captain Kelly gave the order to fire. When the smoke of the volley cleared away, I saw the people stand still, shocked and dumb with surprise. A second later, realizing that the worm had had the audacity to turn, they vented a medley of shrieks and

roars, and closed round the handful of soldiers, to be met by the points of bayonets.

The yelling mass of humanity scattered, took refuge in lanes and houses, but regaining courage, appeared here and there in sections, to be assailed once more by soldiers and police. The latter had to fight it out by themselves after a while, for the military boarded the wrecking train again, and the engineer, completely "rattled," opened the throttle, and whisked them away to the West, leaving a dozen revolver-armed policemen to meet the assaults of a mob that had now increased to five thousand.

The Press abuses the police on principle, but, seeing that heroic encounter, I wavered in the keeping of my promise to Belle not to run into danger. Even as I hesitated, "hurry-up wagons" arrived with re-enforcements from neighboring police stations, and then the

crowd could not disperse quickly enough. It was a desperate sight—men knocking each other down in their haste to get away, and the women who had been spurring them on, now shrieking and groaning like maniacs. One of the poor creatures was hit on the ankle by a bullet, and her falling over into the gutter was too much for my virtuous resolution. Even if she is a dirty, howling Polack, a man does not enjoy seeing a woman knocked down, so I left my doorstep and went to help the lady up. Constitutionally I am not a brave man, but I forgot all about the flying bullets till one took me in the knee, and I toppled over, hitting my head against the curbstone as I did so. I must have been stunned, for when I opened my eyes again the street was empty, except for a thundering vehicle that was bearing straight down upon me.

At first I thought it was a runaway, for the horse was foaming of mouth and bloodshot of eyeball; but no, there was a man, or fiend, with a similar wild gleam in his eye, urging the brute upon me, while he sounded a gong to keep everything out of his way. All this I saw in a flash, and in a flash too went through my mind the advice given by President Cleveland in his proclamation to non-combatants to keep out of harm's way.

I rolled over on my side with the sickening certainty that the next instant the hoofs and the wheels would be upon me, but the horse pulled up on his haunches at my very feet, the rattle and clanging ceased, and a doctor in his shirt sleeves appeared as if by magic.

It was an ambulance, of course.

I fainted when they lifted me, and only came to myself in the hospital—Mary's hospital, and her

ward. Every one in Chicago was crowded that week and the next, but—the ruling principle strong in death—I declined to be put away out of eyeshot and earshot into a private room.

“D’ye want me to send word to Mis’ Gemmel to come?” asked Mary, and I replied drowsily:

“No, don’t. She’s better to keep out of harm’s way. She would be sure to sympathize with the strikers.”

“But she’ll wonder where you are.”

“She can’t get here safely, as things are now, and the mails are all upset. Don’t write. Send a telegram in my name. Date it Chicago, and tell her I’m detained, but that I’ll go home Monday, sure.”

That same night I was off in a high fever. It was days and days before I came to myself, and then I was too weak to ask or to care how everything was going on at

home. My whole interest in life was concentrated upon that hospital ward, and with half-closed eyes I lay there and took notes unconsciously.

An ideal life it may seem to outsiders, but there is as much wire-pulling, as much jealousy and scandal within the walls of one of those big institutions, as anywhere else on this planet. It is an epitome of the world battle, and the strugglers meet in hand-to-hand conflict.

Nurse Dean, the head of our ward, tall and angular in form, stern and cold in feature, was the dragon Belle had told me about, but she knew her business, and I, for one, preferred that she should regard me simply as a machine laid up for repairs. I did not even think her unduly severe upon Mary, after I heard her giving that damsel "Hail Columbia" for her carelessness in having administered the wrong medicine one

whole forenoon to Number Nine—which was myself.

If I had not made a feeble protest in her favor, "Nurse Gemmell" would have been discharged on the spot.

I do not wish to leave the impression that Mary had not in her the making of a fairly good nurse. She was light of foot, as well as quick of hand, and I liked to have her do things for me; found her *aura* agreeable, as Belle would have expressed it. Like many half-educated people, she was very observant, but, so far as I could judge, she had one eye on her work and the other on the lookout for flirtations. I became quite interested in some of them.

There was the German fiddler in the next bed to mine, who could not keep his eyes off Mary whenever she came into the ward, and once when Nurse Dean was off duty, and she brought out

her silver-plated cornet to "toot" a little for him, he declared it was the most ravishing music he had ever heard in his life!

I strongly suspected that the limp young artisan on the other side of me was perfectly well enough to be discharged, but he could not brace himself up to part from Mary. Then there was a young doctor whose face I dimly recognized, but it tired my poor head too much to try to think who he was. He and Mary had many a talk at my bedside about their own affairs. One evening I heard the unmistakable sound of a banjo, and managed to twist myself round far enough to see that this same doctor was playing an accompaniment to Mary's very fair imitation of a skirt dance out in the passage.

The sight revived me so much that I laughed aloud, and Mary came hastily forward, blushing, with finger on her lip. The pink

and white uniform did indeed become her wonderfully well, and I was not surprised to notice hearty admiration in the sleepy blue eyes of the young house surgeon. Where had I seen that "Burne Jones' head" before?

"You don't seem to remember me, Mr. Gemmell," said the owner of it, holding out his hand. "My name's Flaker. I was at Inter-laken summer before last."

"You're a full-fledged M. D. now?"

"Oh, yes, but I'm taking a year's practice in here, before I set up for myself."

Shades of the hotel matrons! They would probably say, if they heard this, that Mary had been sent here on purpose to catch him.

Poor Mary! She had her own row to hoe. She came to me in tears one evening because Nurse Dean had been after her that whole day about one thing or another.

"I am never particular 'nough to please her. If it wasn't for Dr. Flaker I wouldn't stay here another day."

"You like him pretty well, eh?"

"Well enough, an' he's all broke up on me; says he was at Interlaken too, on'y he couldn't say anythin', 'cause he wasn't of age. His folks are awful high-toned."

"They'll have their discipline," thought I.

"By the way, Mary, how long is it since I was brought here?"

"Two weeks to-day."

I sprang almost out of bed in my surprise. "Why didn't you tell me? Has no word been sent to Lake City?"

"None since that first telegram. I don't write very often now to your wife, but when I did, I never said nothin' 'tall about your bein' here, 'cause you told me not to."

"And haven't you had an answer?"

"There's a letter lyin' there from Mis' Gemmell to you. I don't know how she could have found out your address. Nurse Dean said I wasn't to give it to you if you was a bit feverish."

"Fetch it this minute, Mary, or I'll get up and walk the floor," and the girl brought me this remarkable document. It had neither beginning nor end, but rushed to the point at once.

"I know all! You have laughed at my occult tendencies, sneered at my Theosophy, but I can now, alas! give you convincing proof of the penetrative power of the one, the sustaining power of the other. I became so nervous at your continued silence and absence that I did what I had promised you not to do—went out in my astral to hunt for you—and I found you! Would to God I had never tried! It is not my

health that is ruined, but my heart and my happiness. To make assurance doubly sure, I psychometrized the only letter I have received from Mary in weeks. She was cunning enough not to mention your name, but the unspoken testimony was the same. To think that you of all men—but I do not blame you! I have gone down to the *Echo* office, my heart bursting with despair, and have told lies to account for your absence, to keep things moving until you see fit to send your own explanation. I have thrown dust too in the eyes of the family, till you tell me your will concerning them. No, I dare not blame you! Did not I myself thrust the girl into your life—and the best of us are but human. It is Karma! I have deserved this blow for some previous sin of my own, and I bow my head to the stroke. Your own harvest will be just as certain, however long delayed. O David,

David! I can look back now and see the very beginning of your interest in Mary—but that it should end in this—that you should fly from me to her——’”

Having read so far, I burst into hysterical laughter, and it took Mary and her lover and Nurse Dean, and how many more I know not, to hold me in bed. Of course I had a relapse, and my life was despaired of, but I would not, in my sensible moments, allow Mary to write to, or send for Isabel. I pictured the streets still full of rioting strikers, and the mails and trains still disorganized. In waking and in delirium alike, “Keep her out of harm’s way!” I cried, “I’ll go home to-morrow, sure,” but it was a long to-morrow that saw me on the boat bound for Lake City.

Mary wanted to accompany me, for I was still very weak, and had to walk with a stick on account of my knee, but I said brusquely,

"You stay where you are, and keep an eye on Dr. Flaker, or you'll maybe get left again."

"No fear of that!" she said, holding up her left hand to show me a broad gold band with five diamonds in it, adorning her third finger.

"We'll be married as soon as his year is out, for he has plenty of money."

The stones in her ring caught the evening sunlight as she stood on the wharf waving her handkerchief to me, while the boat moved slowly out, and I lay in a steamer chair on the hurricane deck, prepared to enjoy a smoke and a gossip with my old friend, the captain.

I wished her well with all my heart, but I sincerely hoped that I had seen the last of Mary.

Judging the family to be at Interlaken as usual, I took the first train down there, and toiled

in the sun from the depot up to the cottages, by way of the hill, which I had never considered steep before, to find my own house deserted, windows and doors boarded up, veranda unswept, hammocks removed. I would not give any of the neighbors the satisfaction of knowing I was surprised and disappointed, so I kept out of sight till they had all been to the hotel for dinner and dispersed. Then I went in for mine, and after it returned to the beach near the station, lay down on the sand, and waited for the next train.

There was not one back to town until late in the afternoon, and the evening being cloudy, it was quite dark by the time I left the electric car at the corner of our street. Even that little bit of a walk exhausted me, and I had to rest on my stick every few minutes, but what a relief it was to see, gleaming cheerfully as ever,

the windows of the House of the Seven Gables.

I leaned against our iron railing for a minute or two to collect myself before making my appearance, and highly necessary was it for me to do so, because the attitude of the two ladies upon the veranda struck me dumb with amazement, and their conversation completely floored me. That sandy-haired little woman in the low rocker must be my mother, but could that regal figure on the edge of the veranda, with her head in my mother's lap, possibly be my wife? The light from the nursery window showed them to me distinctly, but I kept back in the shadow and listened to the voices.

"My puir lamb! Ye've grat eneugh! Gang awa' tae yer bed; ye're sair forfoughten."

As she stroked the wavy gray hair of the head on her knee, her tone changed.

"I canna thole to think 'at son o' mine has brocht a' this trouble upon ye."

"Not a word against him, mother! He's the best man that ever lived, and I didn't appreciate him, that's all. I can never think of him but as my dear, old, solid, yours-to-count-on Dave Gemmell. He was the silent partner, unpopular, getting no praise, paying all bills, backing me up in every fad, whether his judgment approved or not. He was just the square foundation I could lean away out on—could dance jigs on if I wanted to. Now that he is dead—or dead to me—I can only hope that he is happy. Oh! if I had but listened to you, mother, had never brought that girl into the house. My own vineyard have I not kept."

"Let by-ganes be by-ganes—but I wad jest like to hae Davvit by the lug."

"Lug along, mother! Here I

am!" I managed to shout, and then I hung over that fence and laughed till my specs dropped off in the grass, and my stick fell away from me. I could not move without it, so I had to wait till the two women took pity on me and released me from my impalement.

Between them they got me into the house and on to my old sofa, and listened to what I had to say.

"I was share there must be some mistak'," said my mother, her self-respect restored, but, when I saw how affectionately her hand rested on the bowed head of her weeping daughter-in-law, I did not regret the bullet in my knee.

"We'll put it all down to your Theosophy, Belle—a collection of half-truths, more dangerous than lies, when you shove them too far."

"Don't let us talk about that now, David. It breaks my heart to see you so thin. Your clothes

are just hanging on you. Oh! if I had only known the true state of the case and been there to nurse you!"

"Mary has been very good to me, I assure you."

"I don't want to think about that girl any more. I'm glad she's all right, but I hope never to lay eyes on her again."

"Oh, yes, she's all right, and when she marries Dr. Flaker she won't want to '*papa*' and '*mamma*' us, though she may condescend to patronize us a little."

"I'll be gled o' the day she draps the name o' Gemmell!"

My wife is still a theosophist. If it pleases her to think that she has ascertained the nature and method of existence, I have nothing to say. Sometimes I even look with envy upon her cheerful attitude toward the approach of old age, her conviction that we

are to have another chance—many more chances—to do and to be that which we have failed in doing and being, *this time*.

To judge of a tree by its fruits, there is, of course, no doubt that Isabel, because of, or in spite of her Theosophy, has been

THE MAKING OF MARY.





EPILOGUE.

NURSE DEAN walked through the Pest House, adjoining the great hospital, with the independent mien of the woman who is confident that her skirt clears the ground. Her keen, light-colored eyes took in at a glance the condition of every patient, the occupation of every nurse.

There had been a smallpox epidemic in Chicago, and three of the nurses in — Hospital had taken the disease, two of them lightly, one very heavily; but all were now convalescent. The two had gone home to their friends to

recruit, but the third lay in an invalid chair in a darkened room, looking as if the desire of life had left her. Nurse Dean came in with a cheery smile, put on just outside the door, and proceeded to bathe the girl's eyes with warm water.

"When are you coming out to help me, Mary? I'm sure the light wouldn't hurt you now. I'm having too much night work, those other nurses being gone. I thought you might begin to ease me a little with the smallpox patients through the day."

"I don't know as I care to go on with the business," replied Mary, sometime called Mason.

"Nonsense! You're low-spirited just now because you're not quite better, but wait till you're on your feet and going around the wards again. There's nothing like work of this sort to make a person forget herself."

Nurse Dean's strong but gentle hands began to rub with oil the patient's neck and shoulders.

"I wish I could forget myself and everybody else too. I wish I had died of the smallpox. There aint anybody that cares whether I live or die."

"Hush! Mary, you forget Dr. Flaker."

"Aint it just him I'm thinkin' about? He came in to see me to-day for the first time. He hates smallpox, and he smelt so of iodoform he nearly made me sick. About all he had to say was that it was very foolish of me to meddle with the clothes of them patients, and he could hardly believe I was so crazy's not to be vaccinated when the other nurses were. Just as if it wasn't him that admired my lovely arms. Look at them now!"

"They won't be so bad when

all these scales are off. There! Doesn't that feel better?"

"It feels all right enough, but you know I'll be a sight to be seen the rest of my days. I was glad the room was dark, so's Flaker couldn't get a good look at me. He'll know soon enough—and hate the sight of me. He was always so proud of my 'pearance."

"But I'm sure he likes you for something else too, Mary."

"I don't care whether he does or not, he's got to marry me just the same. I aint goin' to be left again," and the girl tried to make a blazing diamond ring keep in place upon her thin finger.

"You love him very much?"

"Don't know as I do—no more than lots of other fellows; but I won't have any more chances now. I didn't ask to be born into this world, and somebody in it owes me a living."

"See here, Mary!" said the

nurse, in a suddenly energetic tone that made the girl look up at her with startled eyes. "You know, as well as I do, that you can't make that man marry you. Why not give him back his ring of your own free will?"

"Why should I? You think I aint in love?"

"Love? You don't know what the word means in any but its very lowest sense. Suppose you stop loving men, and take to loving women and children; you'll find them much more grateful, I can tell you."

Mary closed her eyes, but there were no eyelashes to keep the tears from trickling out upon the scarred face.

"My dear child!" said Nurse Dean, in a voice hardly recognizable, it was so sympathetic, "you've been fighting for yourself ever since you can remember, and you haven't made much of it, have you?"

The girl's lips shaped an inaudible "No."

"Wouldn't it be a good idea, then, to try a little fighting for other people?"

"I haven't any folks."

"Your 'folks' are whoever you can help in any way. What have you done yet to deserve a foothold on this earth? Instead of seeing how much you can get out of everybody, turn round and see how much you can do for them."

There was a long silence. When Nurse Dean thought her charge was falling asleep, she placed a shawl carefully over her, but Mary, without opening her eyes, drew something from her left hand to her right.

"You can give him back his ring," she said.

Nurse Dean closed the door softly behind her, and then paused for a moment to wipe an

impertinent tear from her cold gray eye.

“I shouldn’t be at all surprised if the smallpox were just The Making of Mary.”

THE END.



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